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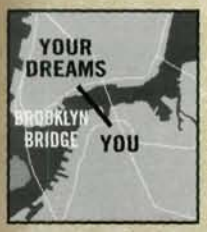

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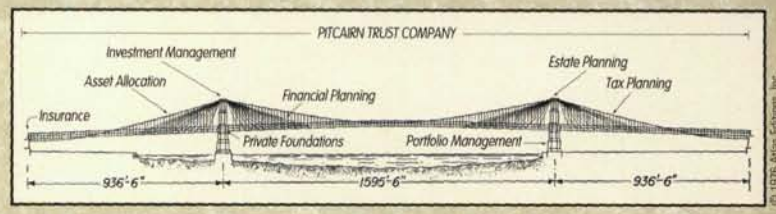

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ LETTERS ■

NORMAN PODHORETZ & HIS CRITICS

Concerning Norman Podhoretz's piece on Glenn Loury, "The 'Loyalty Trap'" (Jan. 25): In his 1963 essay, "My Negro Problem, and Ours," Podhoretz recalled how unsettled he felt walking past groups of blacks in his boyhood neighborhood. "I know now, as I did not know when I was a child," he reflected, "that the police are working for me and not them."

Today, three-quarters of blacks believe that the justice system is still riddled with racial disparities. I have argued instead that the high rate of black incarceration is accounted for mainly by the high rate of black crime. It has less to do with so-called root causes, such as income inequity, and more to do with risk factors such as fatherlessness.

One of the few other academics to acknowledge this is Glenn Loury. In 1995, he criticized a criminologist who insisted that black crime was caused by black poverty and that two-thirds of prisoners should be released: "The amoral approach, in which an entire community is taken to be understandably criminal in view of its economic deprivation, comes close to the . . . patronizing racism which I thought had pretty much died out."

But around the same time, Loury criticized me as "politically naïve and morally incomplete." If the liberal criminologist was guilty of patronizing racism, I was guilty of racial insensitivity. Blacks, he scolded, are "deeply ambivalent about these issues." What did I have to say to these "conflicted people"?

Had I read Loury in the spirit of Podhoretz's recent piece, I might have accused Loury of "wanting to have things both ways." I might have charged him with charging me with backing into a "racist position." I might even have rehashed his moral failures, then chided him for "un-Christian bitterness" toward me and others.

Had I responded in such a way, however, I would have been wrong about Loury. Instead, I responded by engaging his arguments, both in private and in print, including in the pages of NR.

Podhoretz is right that Loury has been challenging conservatives to move beyond "benign neglect," which, as defined by Podhoretz, is the "view that in the post-civil-rights era only blacks can do for themselves what they need done. . . . "

My conservative problem, and Loury's, is that many on the right are precisely what Podhoretz pleads "guilty" to being, namely, "unregenerate and unreconstructed" believers in the civic efficacy and moral sufficiency of benign neglect carried out via devolution politics and withdrawal from government programs.

Loury, asserts Podhoretz, has "often engaged in a certain amount of equivocation." Yet Loury is one of the few math-wizard economists of his generation to do both academic research and popular writing on big social-policy questions. He is one of the few social scientists to err analytically on the side of individual and cultural variables over so-called structural variables (e.g., poverty rates). He is one of the few scholars to tackle questions that cut close to home, which, in his case, has meant his roots as a black man from Chicago's South Side. He has thereby exposed himself to charges of "betrayal" on the one side and of falling into the "loyalty trap" on the other.

Such "equivocation" is commendable, as is Loury's decision to bear public witness to his religious convictions as a Christian, even as he has cautioned me and others who have been touting the extent and efficacy of church-anchored programs for black youths.

Many people in the inner city are, as Loury once phrased it, "positive forces for change." Liberals have generally failed to empower or lift up these people. Beyond benign neglect, Loury and I have been asking what, if anything, conservatives are prepared to do—not argue, not debate, not problem-monger about, but do—to help black America's most disadvantaged citizens. Our common line of argument here could almost be reduced to the old Jewish question, "If I am for myself alone, who am I?"

I know that Loury's recent debates with fellow conservative scholars have been rough. But it would be sad if a rapprochement among these scholars proved impossible, and sadder still if Podhoretz, the great man who helped lead the country's revival of conservative thought in the latter half of this century, did more to deepen than to heal the rift.

John J. DiIulio Jr.
Princeton, N.J.

(continued on page 4)

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(continued from page 2)

I am a friend of both Norman Podhoretz and Glenn Loury and, as friends do, have disagreed with both over the years. This time the disagreement, or at least difference, is with Podhoretz in his attack on Loury. Since he says the early Loury whom he so admires showed great courage, the reader may conclude that the later Loury whom he so sharply criticizes has succumbed to cowardice. I am confident that is not the case. As Podhoretz acknowledges, while the Loury whom he likes emphasized problems within the black community, he never denied the problems without, such as racism. Like Loury, and unlike some other conservatives, I think racism is an important and continuing problem. Unlike Loury, and like Podhoretz, I am skeptical that affirmative action, no matter how it is "mended," can alleviate the problem. These are honest disagreements and carry no intimations of moral turpitude on the part of those disagreeing. Glenn Loury's is a deeply conservative mind and soul, and he is, from within the black American experience, speaking a truth from which we have benefited in the past and will, I am confident, benefit in the future.

Richard John Neuhaus
New York, N.Y.

I am deeply disappointed that Norman Podhoretz and NATIONAL REVIEW would use slanderous personal attacks to attempt to discredit Glenn Loury because they disagree with his political and social views. In particular, "The 'Loyalty Trap'" claims that Glenn "had long been a drug addict and an abuser of women." The latter charge is based on a groundless case dismissed in court (as indicated by the publicly available record). As Glenn's wife of 15 years and friend of 25, I can say categorically that there is no basis for the claim. The former exaggerated charge is based on the fact that, like many others, Glenn had a substance-abuse problem. One approach would have been to congratulate him for quickly and effectively dealing with a problem of relatively brief duration (now over 10 years in the past) and becoming a better husband, father, and compassionate social critic as a result of the experience. As we know, drug and alcohol problems persist for many others year after year, with unfortunate but inevitable collateral damage. Instead of taking the high road, Podhoretz chose to use the problem as an opportunity for character assassination more reminiscent of the *National Enquirer* than of NATIONAL REVIEW. Shame on you.

Linda Datcher Loury
Medford, Massachusetts

Glenn Loury is apparently frustrated with much of the conservative movement; and leading conservatives, such as Norman Podhoretz, are equally frustrated with him. Whatever the causes of this unfortunate state of affairs, I wish to acknowledge the profound debt owed to Loury by conservative members of the Commission on Civil Rights. Time and again during my term as commissioner (1993–98) we called on Loury to help us analyze and understand data put forward by the staff and left-wing members of the commission to justify recommendations supporting preference-based "affirmative action" and other liberal social policies. Loury was generous in helping us to identify crucial errors of fact and logic in the arguments advanced by proponents of these politics. I am personally deeply grateful to him.

Robert P. George
Princeton, N.J.

John DiIulio is so generous about my own work that it makes me feel churlish to say anything to him except, "Thank you." But what can I do? He evidently imagines that I have not tried to engage the new Glenn Loury's arguments when, as I indicated in my article, I have done so repeatedly both in private and in public. Loury's response in every case has either been to take offense on the spot or to berate me in print later on. Furthermore, on at least three occasions I have asked Loury the inverse of the question Mr. DiIulio himself asks of me: What is it that you want us (whites, the government, conservatives) to do? But never have I succeeded in eliciting an answer from Loury beyond a banality like "improve the schools." From which I conclude that his feelings—and yes, they are bitter, and unaccountably so, toward the people who used to be his friends and allies—have outrun his thinking on these matters. As to "benign neglect," I have nothing to add beyond what I wrote in my article on the need for blacks to break the cycle of dependency on others.

Moving on to Richard Neuhaus, I cannot for the life of me figure out what he is talking about. I neither said nor implied—nor do I secretly think—that the change in Loury is motivated by "cowardice" or any other form of "moral turpitude." What I accused Loury of was "intellectual amnesia" in falling into the same "loyalty trap" he had once worked so hard to escape, and I charged that—as with James Baldwin before him—this development had robbed his work of the great value it once possessed. Nothing in Father Neuhaus's letter is relevant to what I wrote and believe. He is arguing with something, but it is not my article.

Turning to Mrs. Loury, I have to inform her that she is herself committing slander in accusing me and NATIONAL REVIEW of this ugly offense. What I said about Glenn Loury's drug problem was taken directly from his own words in the Epilogue to his own book, One by One from the Inside Out. *There he writes of his "many years" of "slavery to drugs and alcohol." He also speaks of his inability during that period to be faithful to his wife and says that this was not "only" a matter of "adultery." This in itself I interpreted as a confession that he had been what I characterized as "an abuser of women"—an interpretation that was made the more plausible by the charges of physical abuse lodged against him by another woman. The fact that this case was dismissed in court still leaves us with Loury's own words about the way he treated his wife before becoming a Christian, as well as his frank description of his addictions. It is hard for me to understand in what sense quoting those words can be construed as "character assassination," especially when I myself went on to write exactly what Mrs. Loury denounces me for failing to write: that "through religion he found his way back to health, tranquility, and marital stability." But most of all, I wish to stress that my argument against the new Loury is neither based nor depends upon these particular details of his personal life. I brought them up only because he himself did so for the purpose of drawing a connection between the old Adam in him and his later development.*

If Robert P. George thinks that his letter represents a criticism of, or even a pertinent comment on, my article, he is sorely mistaken. Having fully and unstintingly acknowledged and expressed gratitude for Loury's invaluable contributions in the past, I find it entirely gratuitous to be answered with a testimonial to the great services he performed before he fell, or jumped, into "the loyalty trap."

Surely there is a faint whiff of something patronizing in this defense of Loury, and in some of the others above as well. —NP

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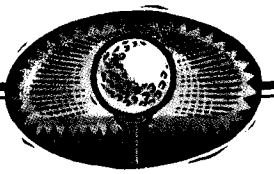

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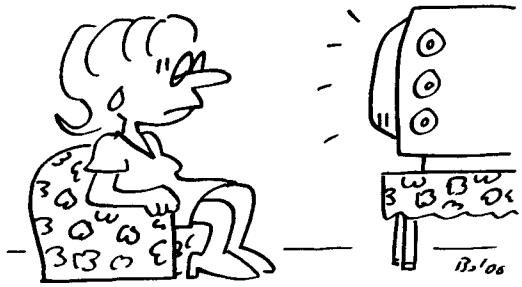
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Clinton** meets with **Pope John Paul II** in St. Louis on day Vatican releases revised exorcism ritual, first update since 1614. Examples of demonic possession are "rather scarce," explains **Jorge Arturo Cardinal Medina Estevez**, but devil's influence can be seen in "the idolatry of sex and power." Furthermore, "the use of the lie is his preferred strategy." . . . Zogby poll: 63 percent believe Clinton lied to grand jury. . . . CNN poll: 53 percent have negative view of Clinton "as a person." . . . Pope enjoys 85 percent approval among American Catholics. . . . *Roll Call* cartoonist **R. J. Matson** suggests Pope's thoughts on Clinton: "Hate the spin. Love the spinner."

■ Clinton, speaking day after State of the Union address, on why federal surplus should not be returned in the form of tax cuts: "We have no permanent deficit anymore, the natural condition is a surplus, okay—so the question is, What do we do with it? We could give it all back to you and hope you spend it right. [Applause.] But I think—here's the problem. If you don't spend it right, here's what's going to happen. . . ." Federal Reserve chairman **Alan Greenspan**, same day: "I would far prefer reducing taxes than increasing spending, and, indeed, I don't think it's a close call." . . . Reacting to D.C.'s scandal atmosphere, National Federation of Independent Business changes names of departments containing words *affairs* and *relations*, such as Public Affairs and Government Relations. . . . House manager **Henry Hyde**, when asked about Senate efforts to speed trial: "I'm glad they were not at the Alamo or Valley Forge." . . . *Time*'s **Margaret Carlson**: "This is a prediction. The president will sink like a stone the minute he's acquitted." . . . "He's been damaged beyond repair and there is no way to turn disgrace into victory," Democratic consultant **Ray Strother** tells *Washington Times*'s **Donald Lambro**. . . . **Eleanor Clift** on *McLaughlin Group*: "That herd of managers from the House, I mean frankly all they were missing was white sheets. They're like night riders going over. This is bigger than Bill Clinton." . . . Alice Starr, Ken's wife, on Hillary Rodham Clinton in *Ladies' Home Journal*: "I admire all her hairdos. Personally, I've had the same one for the past 20 years" (quoted in *Hotline*).

■ Republican strategists worry Vice President **Al Gore** faces cakewalk in Democratic primaries, begin to hope lack of opponent will result in "**Lungren** effect" leaving him unprepared for general election against battle-hardened GOPer. . . . **Gary Bauer** wins CPAC straw poll of conservative activists with 28 percent, followed by Texas Gov. **George W. Bush** with 24 percent. Rivals grumble Bauer paid registration fees for supporters. Comments one GOP tactician: "The test is going to be in Ames, Iowa, not at CPAC." . . . In Iowa, **Steve Forbes**'s campaign signs up former state GOP chairman **Steve Grubbs**, several Christian Coalition operatives, and veterans of **Phil Gramm**'s 1996 campaign. . . . Forbes candidacy "no longer about if, but how," says aide. One scenario has official announcement delayed until June. Strategy involves raising up to $25 million from individual donors, then supplementing campaign kitty from own fortune. Forbes also expects to refuse federal matching funds, freeing him from spending limits. . . . Forbes digs at Bush: "I don't come from a family of career politicians. . . . I come from family of entrepreneurs and risk-takers—of taxpayers, not tax raisers." . . . **Lamar Alexander** labels Bush slogan "compassionate conservatism" "weasel words," Bauer calls it "redundant." . . . Forthcoming books: *Unfinished Business* by Forbes set for May release by Regnery, *Worth Fighting For* by **Dan Quayle** to come out in June from Word.



"Our regularly scheduled program will not be seen tonight, so that a bunch of politicians may lie to you . . . "

■ Marine Corps uniform worn by **Oliver North** during Iran-contra hearings auctioned in Virginia for $7,000, with proceeds to charity. . . . As **Alan Guttmacher** Institute estimates 22 percent (about 46 million) of all pregnancies worldwide end in abortion, UCLA national survey of college freshmen finds only 51 percent believe abortion should be legal—down from 65 percent at start of decade. . . . New York criminal-court judge **Michael Brennan** cites own pagan ancestors in dismissing case against 23 trespassers charged with violating after-dark curfew on Staten Island beach, noting they were simply celebrating winter solstice. "Commemoration of this occasion for religious, historical, or educational purposes is to be commended," he writes.

■ Venezuela hops on anti-tobacco bandwagon, sues American cigarette companies for costs of treating sick smokers. . . . Taiwan establishes formal diplomatic relations with Macedonia, prompting China to threaten to break ties to this former section of Yugoslavia. . . . January death toll in Sierra Leone's civil war expected to surpass 3,000.

■ **Taki** awards Prize for Reckless Disregard of the Truth in Pursuit of Self-Interest to ex-White House flack **Mike McCurry**: "You were lied to, you lied, you lied to people who knew you were lying, you protected the lies of those who signed your paycheck. . . . What makes you special is your motivation—not loyalty, not self-regard, but sheer self-interest. For, Mike, when your paycheck stopped, you turned your coat, went on the lecture circuit, and are now becoming a wealthy man by confessing how much it hurt to be lied to, and to lie in return, and what a bad man it was whose paycheck you cashed for so long." **NR**

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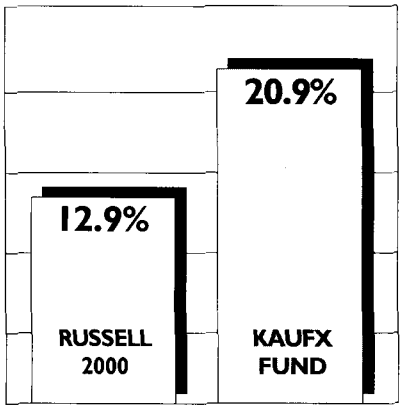

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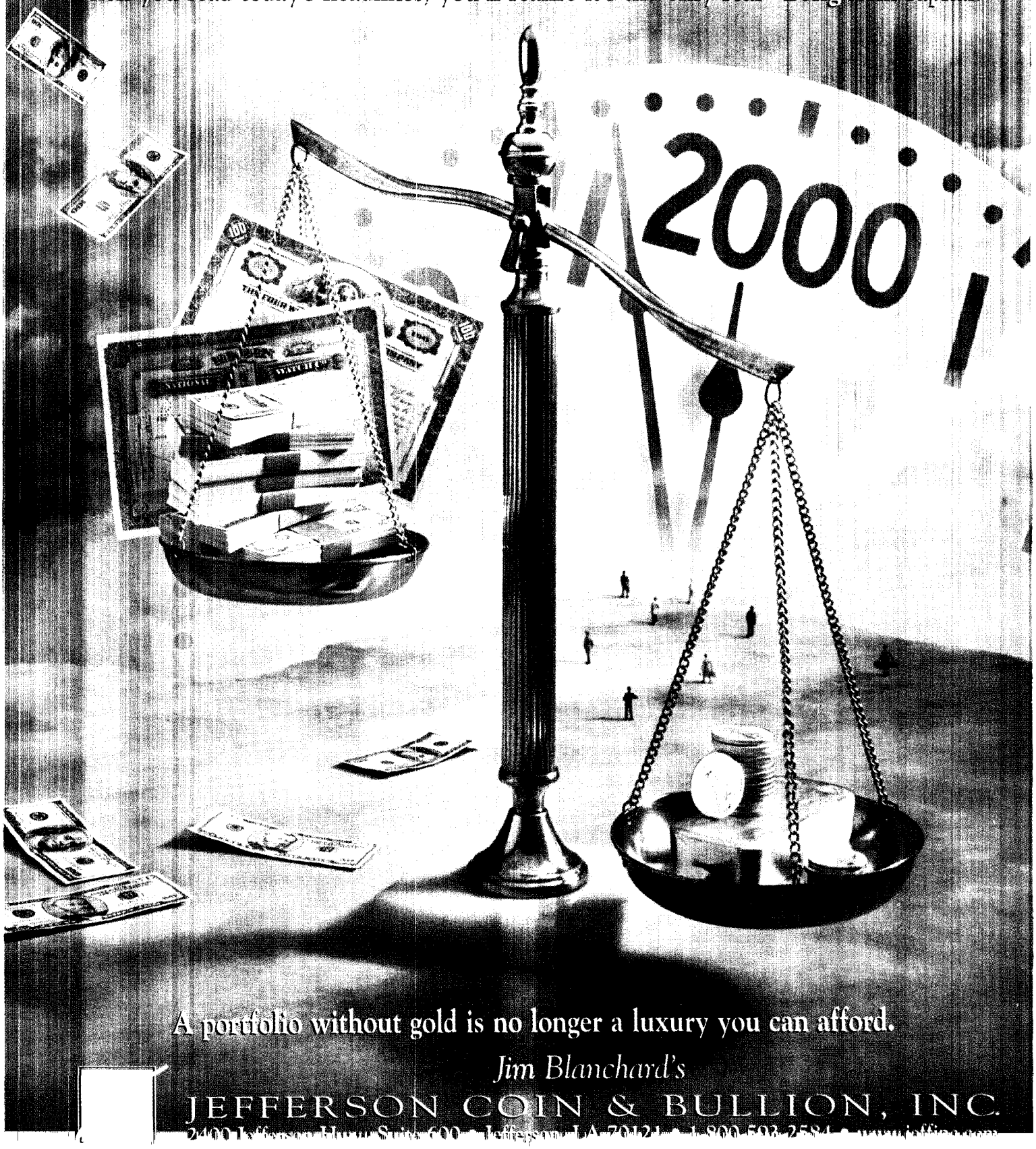

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THE WEEK

■ As long as we're looking for compromise, Wes Pruden, editor of the *Washington Times*, has a suggestion: Remand the Clinton case to juvenile court.

■ Ken Starr brought obstruction-of-justice charges against Julie Steele, the treacherous friend of Kathleen Willey (how come everyone knows about Linda Tripp and not this beaut?). The courts reinstated a tax-fraud case against Webster Hubbell. Finally, word leaked out that Starr might indict President Clinton for perjury and obstruction of justice. The first two actions are quite proper: Knowing who got Steele to change her tune (first she backed Willey up, then she filed an affidavit tearing her down) would shine a light on Clinton's strong-arm tactics. Hubbell got a payoff even grander than the one Monica was supposed to get, and in each case Vernon Jordan helped with damage control. Whether the Constitution allows the indictment of a sitting president, however, is an open question, and any indictment should probably be sealed or delayed until 2001. There remains the larger question of whether any of these matters should be on an independent counsel's desk to begin with. Starr has done some things well, some badly, but the seemingly infinite time and resources at his disposal have properly stoked fears of prosecutorial excess. Meanwhile Congress, off the hook, did not act until compelled. Charles Fried, Reagan's solicitor general, argued in his challenge to the independent-counsel statute that the ultimate sanction for crime in the Oval Office must be the "long, deep shadow" of impeachment. It will be time, when this is all over, to restore Congress's responsibility.

■ Did Abraham Lincoln and Patrick Henry once walk these shores? Mourn no more—we have Cheryl Mills and Dale Bumpers. That was the verdict, anyway, after they finished their summings-up for Bill Clinton: "19th-century, red-blooded eloquence," "oratorical techniques that were invented in antiquity." To interject a post-antique question: Hello? Miss Mills played the race card of herself, and Bumpers is an old cured ham. You don't have to thumb through *Bartlett's* to restore your sense of proportion: Mario Cuomo, Jesse Jackson, Colin Powell, Billy Graham, and Margaret Thatcher all speak better. A silver lining of Bill Clinton's victory will be that we will all be able to go back to being mediocre without boasting about it.

■ Ward Connerly, in Florida to assess the prospects for an anti-quota referendum on the model of California's Proposition 209, made a courtesy call on Gov. Jeb Bush, who told the press he would not give Connerly any help. "He wants a war. I'm a lover," Bush said. Which means what, exactly? Connerly wants to end the caste structure that the regime of quotas stimulates; to do that requires political conflict. Bush is saying either that he shares Connerly's goals but is too timid to fight for them or that he prefers the rancid status quo. And this Bush brother was supposed to be the conservative one.

■ At the CPAC gathering, George W. Bush came in for some sniping from his rivals as his father's son. (Maybe after the Ward Connerly episode, they will hit him as his brother's brother.) It is striking how many American political dynasties have either maintained continuity over the years (Adamses, Kennedys) or gotten worse (Fishes, Tafts). The Clintons did improve (the George and DeWitt Clintons, not this crowd). That changes happen means there is no biological determinism. That they are mostly for the worse reflects Robert Frost's line, "Nothing gold can stay." Once in a blue moon someone has a better idea than his ancestors, which is about as often as anyone has a good idea, period. Gov. Bush is entitled to be judged on his own ideas, not those of his family.

■ Americans will have an opportunity to do this as they watch how Bush handles his state legislature during its current session. In his January 27 State of the State address, he unveiled a center-right agenda. Bush is sticking to a campaign promise to cut property taxes by $2 billion, even as Texas's projected budget surplus has shrunk from $6.3 billion to $5.6 billion. Also welcome is his continued support for school choice and a parental-notification law for minors seeking abortions. Other goals are more questionable. Much of the rest of that surplus will go toward new spending on education. Bush called for "unifying our diverse state through common values"—and then proceeded to repeat himself in Spanish. And a few of his proposals are Clintonesque: like increasing child-care subsidies for low-income mothers and reducing the sales tax on diapers. Even his call for ending social promotion is more promise than punch: A loophole would let students who receive remedial instruction advance regardless of their test scores. The Bush package would benefit from a little less "compassion" and bit more conservatism.

■ The unifying theme of President Clinton's penultimate budget blueprint is that the government is too small and doesn't cost enough. While Clinton says the budget promotes "smaller but more progressive government," he is asking for $10 trillion in federal spending over the next five years. In

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inflation-adjusted terms, that's more than twice the cost of fighting World War II. For all the president's rhetoric about "saving Social Security first," he would squander almost half the surplus by spending $150 billion over five years on two dozen new programs. Clinton's budget also includes 81 new tax increases designed to raise $82 billion—and that's not counting the Justice Department's plan to sue tobacco companies, which would effectively raise cigarette taxes (already slated to increase by 55 cents a pack). But with tax receipts already 61 percent higher than when Clinton was first elected, the government needs no more tribute from the private sector. Clinton's government is getting more "progressive," all right, but it isn't getting any smaller.

■ *The Supreme Court ruled that the Clinton administration* may not use statistical sampling in the 2000 Census for purposes of apportioning congressional seats among the states. The Court was silent on the legality of sampling for other purposes, such as redistricting within states—and that's where the administration could make the most mischief. In California, the Democratic government could use the sampling results to tip as many as six or seven U.S. House seats from the GOP to the Democrats. In two previous showdowns with the administration, House Republicans have punted and hoped the courts would save them. Next time—probably in June, when the Census Bureau runs out of funds—they will have to fight for themselves.

■ "NATO has finally bestirred itself to threaten military action if Serb strongman Slobodan Milosevic fails to enter negotiations on restoring Kosovo's autonomy. If a settlement with the Kosovars is reached, our allies want U.S. ground troops to help police it, as in Bosnia. (The allies won't even go along with air strikes now unless we promise troops later.) The price of outright American refusal would be the rapid unraveling of any agreement and the acceleration of moves toward an independent European defense capability, which would divide NATO and seriously diminish American influence in Europe. Congress should demand that NATO's military actions be decisive rather than demonstrative and that the Europeans carry most of the load on the ground.

■ "Much of what we see in this survey is disturbing," said Faye Wattleton, president of the Center for Gender Equality, in announcing the results of a poll commissioned by the feminist group. The bad news: Women are becoming more religious and less supportive of abortion and preferences for minorities and women. A majority of women are now in accord with or to the right of the Republican platform on abortion: Forty percent believe that abortion should be available only in cases of rape or incest or to save the life of the mother; another 13 percent would not permit it under any circumstances. In a survey two years ago, 45 percent of women held these views. The current poll found that a plurality of women think that affirmative-action programs should be maintained—it did not use the more descriptive term *preferences*—but fewer women hold strong views on this issue than formerly. Six years ago, over 60 percent of women thought that politics and religion should not mix, but women are now evenly divided about whether politicians should be guided by religious values. Finally, more than twice as many women think the Christian Coalition works in the interest of women as think it a threat (41 percent to 18 percent). At least Miss Wattleton has this consolation: She now has a better understanding of women voters than do most Republican politicians.

■ After a direct plea from Pope John Paul II that he have mercy on Darrell Mease, a particularly vicious triple-murderer, Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri commuted his sentence of execution to life in prison. The Pope has been inveighing against the death penalty in developed nations, and his strongest argument has been that it precludes repentance (and salvation). This is not necessarily so: As Samuel Johnson famously remarked, the imminence of execution concentrates the mind. The use of execution, among other things, testifies to a high valuation of life. And life in jail by no means precludes further murders. Of course there are questions of justice and proportionality. Gov. Carnahan, who says he still supports capital punishment, violated a fundamental postulate of republican government: that it is a rule of laws and not men.

■ In 1952 Elia Kazan, one of the greatest of movie and theater directors, testified under oath that eight members of the Group Theater had been, with him, members of the Communist Party. Soon afterwards, he made it clear in an ad published in the *New York Times* that he had named names on principle, and called Communism a "dangerous and alien conspiracy" about which "liberals must speak out." Kazan, like Edmund Wilson and Irving Howe, also considered that the Communist Party had a baleful effect on both Hollywood and the theater. Because of his bearing witness he has had to

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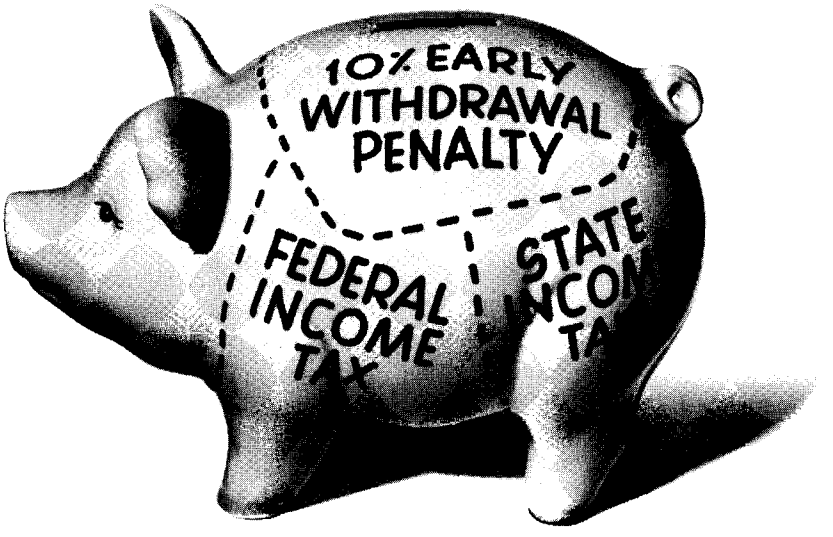

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QUIET, PLEASE

I rise to toast the managers
(That's why I clinked my glass);
Their spunk recalls the Spartans who
Held Persia at the pass.
As Monica reviews her frocks
And Vernon eyes his ties,
While Sidney lubricates his gums,
I hoist one to those guys.

—W. H. VON DREELE

wait 47 years to receive an honorary Oscar, which will be bestowed in March.

■ Last October, *Nature* announced a DNA study showing that the last child of Sally Hemings, Thomas Jefferson's slave and reputed concubine, was indeed fathered by a Jefferson, presumably him. Jefferson scholars have pointed out that any one of numerous male Jeffersons living in the neighborhood of Monticello could have been Sally's paramour. Jefferson fans shouldn't have waited so long to make this point, since their official response to the Sally Hemings story, since the mid 19th century, has been that the white father of her children was one of two Jefferson nephews surnamed Carr. Carr DNA was tested by *Nature* and turned up negative. It sounds vaguely Clintonian to be arguing now that, no, Sally's kids were fathered by *other* relatives. Purely Clintonian was the timing of *Nature*, rushing the story into print before the election, to suggest that (all together now) "everybody does it."

■ Will a robot replace Mrs. Smith in third-grade English? Not anytime soon, although the Educational Testing Service—the people who bring us the SATs—plans to employ a computerized reader to grade student essays on the Graduate Management Admission Test. This machine, called an E-rater, can do little more than a standard grammar- and spelling-checker. But advocates predict great things from E-rater's descendants, even a computer that may someday lead class discussion. Wait—a tireless machine working for better education? Better keep the NEA away from its circuit breakers.

■ Would William Shakespeare be able to keep a job in Washington? Consider: "If not from hell, the devil is a niggard" (*Henry VIII*). "Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is, so plentiful of excrement?" (*The Comedy of Errors*) " . . . And hang more praise upon deceased I / Than niggard truth would willingly impart" (Sonnet 72). The moral? "Be not a niggard of your speech" (*Macbeth*).

IMPEACHMENT

Finding of Principle

THE extreme unlikelihood that the Senate will muster the requisite two-thirds majority to remove President Clinton from office is leading many senators to consider lesser sanctions. One option floated was to convict Clinton of the offenses charged by the House without removing him. Opinion pretty quickly consolidated that the Constitution excluded this possibility in declaring, "The President . . . shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, . . . high Crimes and Misdemeanors." The Constitution also stipulates that "Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification" for future office. This cannot be said to imply that judgment may fall short of removal.

The fallback position is to pass a "finding of fact" resolution condemning Clinton for lying to a grand jury, etc., without using words such as "guilty," "perjury," and "obstruction of justice." The attractions of this resolution are moral and, for Republicans, political. Clinton would not leave this episode without formal rebuke, and Republicans would align themselves with the public's opinion that Clinton should be punished but not removed from office. The constitutional objections here are various: The Senate would be drawing up new charges against the president, a power reserved to the House; the precedent would enable future Congresses to harass presidents with sliding-scale impeachments. Worst, Congress would in effect be declaring formally that grave and undoubted offenses do not render a president unfit for office.

And the *partisan* case for a fact-finding resolution is no stronger than the constitutional one. Democrats would describe the resolution as a repudiation of the House Republicans. For months Democrats have (when not trying to muddle the factual case) argued precisely that Clinton has committed offenses that "do not rise to the level of impeachment." Besides, Republicans have already sustained whatever damage their association with impeachment may do to them.

The way to achieve "closure" is to vote up or down on conviction. Conviction will almost certainly lose. Republicans will have to resign themselves, at best, to a hung jury, with a majority of the Senate voting to remove Clinton; and they will have to resign themselves as well to the spinning of this result by Clinton and the media as an acquittal. Clinton will escape all judgment but God's and history's. But if Democrats want to wave the bloody shirt until the next elections, let them explain why we shouldn't "move on," as the public wants.

It is understandable that senators, particularly Republicans facing difficult elections in 2000, might want to avoid a tough vote on removal. But there can—and should—be no happy ending to this story short of what the Constitution demands: President Clinton's removal from office.

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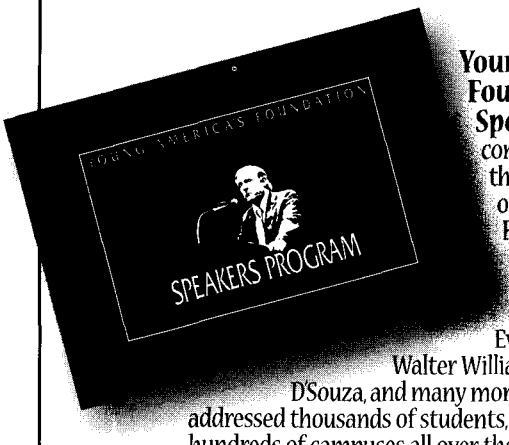

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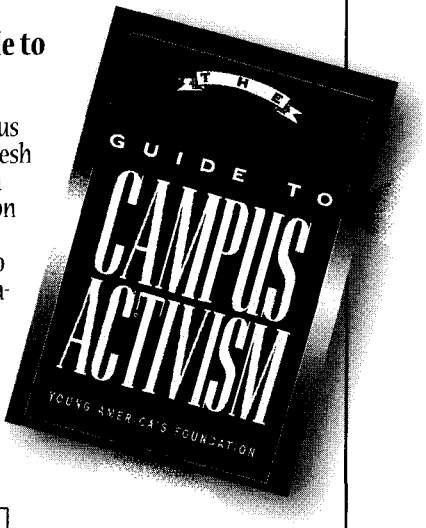

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SOCIAL SECURITY

Clinton's Retirement

Two elements of Clinton's plan to "save Social Security" display its unseriousness. The most glaring is its double-counting of funds. Clinton proposed in his State of the Union address to devote 60 percent of the federal budget surplus to Social Security. But more than half of the surplus *comes from* Social Security, and thus cannot be added to it. By counting this money twice, Clinton can pretend to have gone halfway to "saving" the program (i.e., making its numbers add up for the next 75 years) at the stroke of a pen.

The second sign of cynicism is the president's proposal for the government to invest up to a quarter of the Social Security surplus. Instead of privatizing Social Security, he would socialize private-capital markets. States and localities have invested in the markets before, but never with this much money. And these investments have brought corruption and politicization in their wake on not a few occasions. The federal government cannot possibly be a passive investor. Even if it bought a broad index fund, its choice of index could not fail to boost some sectors of the economy at the expense of others. And already Jesse Jackson is demanding that the government eschew investment in liquor, tobacco, and gun companies. Indeed, it would be difficult for conservatives to argue in principle against such moral and political judgments, since we have often argued that federal money may properly come with conditions, as in the debates over welfare and the National Endowment for the Arts. Clinton must realize that Republicans could never approve a plan this dangerous to free markets. He proposed government-directed investment not in order to see it enacted but 1) to be able to accuse Republicans of balking at a plan to save Social Security and 2) to block tax cuts.

Many Republicans seem prepared to go along with the president in subordinating tax cuts to the paying down of the national debt. This is what his Social Security plan really entails (to the extent it is not an accounting trick). The dubious theory is that debt repayment will lower interest rates and thus stimulate economic growth. But interest rates are much more dependent on inflation than on the budget, and tax cuts would have a far greater stimulative effect. A theoretically immortal entity like the federal government can safely carry vast amounts of debt as long as it can service it. To say that we should devote major resources to retiring the debt is to say that there is no better use for this money—no opportunities beckoning, no needs unmet—in either the public or, since taxes have to be kept higher than necessary, the private sector.

Instead of stepping up to reform Social Security, President Clinton has retired from the field. Republicans cannot reform the program alone and would be foolhardy to try. They ought, however, to look again at a Clinton proposal that could actually advance the cause of privatization. His "USA Accounts" would establish 401(k)'s for workers and use 11 percent of the budget surplus to match their contributions. The details need to be watched—workers must own their accounts, and redistributive impulses have to be checked—but the accounts would further several conservative goals. They would represent a sizable tax cut: A portion of workers' savings would no longer be subject to double taxation. And millions of Americans would be introduced to the practice of managing the investment of their own money. In time, perhaps they would demand the power to invest their Social Security contributions too.

Thanks, He Needed That

Though Greenspan's a novice at slapstick,
He handled the bucket with style.
The water still trickles down Clinton,
While Grandpa, now out in the aisle,
Hurls eggs with depressing precision
As Social Security jokes
Fall flatter than Grandmother's bosom,
And Bill—hey, that's vaudeville!—soaks.

—W. H. von Dreele

CULTURE WATCH

Bad Rap

In 1979 an obscure pop group called the Sugarhill Gang scored a surprise hit with a novelty single called "Rapper's Delight," whose lyrics were not sung but chanted. Twenty years later, rap has become the largest-selling category of recorded music, and youth-obsessed culture-watchers are busily assuring us that we are all hip-hoppers now. Maybe. But one may take leave to doubt that it has truly changed the face of American music—yet. For all the statistics purporting to prove its ubiquity, rap has nothing even remotely approaching the kind of culture-wide reach that rock and roll had achieved by 1970 and retains to this day. (None of the characters in *Daria*, MTV's wonderfully knowing animated sitcom about the daily lives of teenagers, has any knowledge of or interest in rap.)

It could be, of course, that postmodern America has become so culturally fractured that mass popularity of the kind enjoyed by Elvis Presley and the Beatles will henceforth be a thing of the increasingly remote past. There is no longer any TV series that "everybody" watches, no magazine that "everybody" reads, no musical group whose records "everybody" buys. We are all monads now: The cultural firewalls are growing steadily higher, the distances that separate us greater.

As for the actual content of rap, nobody talks about it much anymore—it seems far, far longer than seven years ago that Bill Clinton made political hay by attacking Sister Souljah—and it

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may well be that the sickening excesses of gangsta rap have become as untrendy as Austin Powers's wardrobe. If so, one can only be thankful. But whatever the latest nuances of fashion, hip-hop today remains more or less what it was in 1979: a hard, graceless half-music stripped of all semblance of melody and harmony, existing solely as a vehicle for unpolished couplets that allegedly express the unvarnished truth about the way we live now.

Maybe they do. And maybe the records of Puffy Daddy and the Notorious B.I.G. will sound as timeless to our grandchildren as the ballads of Cole Porter and Johnny Mercer do to us. Or maybe not. Asked in 1980 what he thought of rock, Benny Goodman replied, "All I'll say is I can't imagine someone 40 years from now reminiscing fondly about having heard Blondie, or even the Rolling Stones. . . . What could they say about it? 'Remember the volume, the flickering lights? Remember when we got high?' I kind of doubt it." Goodman was playing for hordes of screaming teenagers 64 years ago; the records he made back then are still in print, and selling briskly. It will be interesting to see how many people are still listening to Notorious B.I.G. (or Mick Jagger) in 2063, and how many to the King of Swing.

—TERRY TEACHOUT

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Memo to Editorial Contenders
Re: $10,000
The News Corporation (Rupert Murdoch) has announced the establishment of the Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Opinion Journalism, in memory of the late *New York Post* editor (and occasional contributor to NR).

The prize is for a columnist or editorialist whose work "best reflects the spirit that animated the writings of Eric Breindel: love of country and its democratic institutions, as well as the act of bearing witness to the evils of totalitarianism."

Those who wish to be considered should submit no more than five columns or editorials, written in the 1998 calendar year. Deadline: April 15, 1999. Entry fee: $25. Address: Eric Breindel Memorial Foundation, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, 3rd floor, New York, N.Y. 10036.

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I fear that you have missed an opportunity for some good Scrabble points in your rejection of "jader." The *OED* has "jade" as a transitive verb, meaning "to exhaust, wear out," which is drawn from the noun meaning either an old, worn-out horse or a similarly treated woman. From this we also have the form "jaded," meaning "tired, worn out" or "dulled by continual experience or indulgence."

Might not some of our nation's leaders be considered the "jaders of the American conscience"? According to my reckoning, that's worth 14 points without any doubles!

Sincerely,
Gregory C. Benoit
Dubuque, Iowa

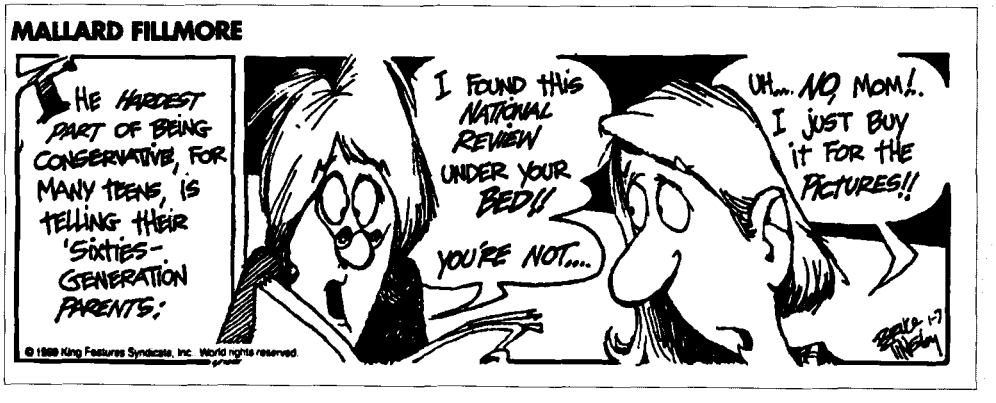
Dear Mr. Benoit: Okay, we'll take your word for it. But . . . never saw it used. Will begin.

Cordially, WFB

Dear Mr. Buckley: Regarding your recent "Notes & Asides" item on the Scrabble player: She argued that white signified the absence of color, which is scientifically incorrect. White is the integration of all color. It is black that is the absence of color, which is why a prism breaks white light into a rainbow and no black appears. I'll leave it to the politically correct crowd to sort out all the implications.

Yours truly,
Gary Greenberg
New York, N.Y.

■ To: Bill
From: Peter Rodman
Did you see this cartoon?


MALLARD FILLMORE
THE HARDEST PART OF BEING CONSERVATIVE, FOR MANY TEENS, IS TELLING THEIR 'SIXTIES-GENERATION PARENTS:
I FOUND THIS NATIONAL REVIEW UNDER YOUR BED!!
YOU'RE NOT....
UH... NO, MOM!.. I JUST BUY IT FOR THE PICTURES!!
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■ Dear Mr. Buckley: The English language can lead to many misinterpretations, as you have frequently noted. As our vocabulary expands, increasing the size of the dictionary, it is no wonder that people do not understand one another, leading to conflict. An example of misinterpretation can be found in labeling food *fat free.* Do they mean there is no charge for its fat content or that there is no fat in the product? Please interpret.

Sincerely,
William M. Fuchs, M.D.
Huntington, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Fuchs: Why should a larger vocabulary cause confusion? It can be, and is, that the number of unfamiliar words increases, which is something else. One assumes that doctors of medicine are familiar with the necessary increase in medical terms, which doesn't mean, does it, that you would prescribe for hernia the same medicine as for poison ivy? In re *fat free,* the ambiguity would disappear if it were properly written—fat-free, a compound adjective. Cordially,

—WFB

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■ THE SCANDAL ■

Daddy Dearest

When patriarchy goes bad.

RICHARD BROOKHISER

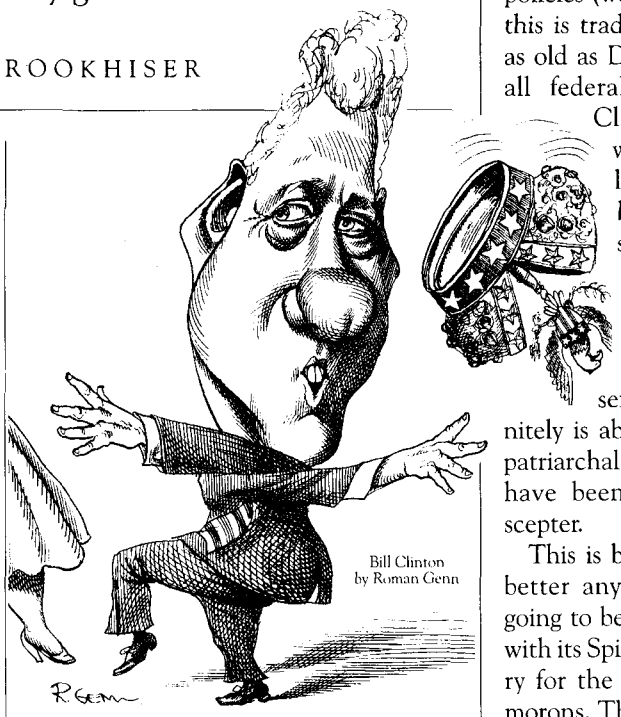
WHERE do we stand as the Clinton trial winds down? Where we often do—in trouble, but with reason for hope.

The best guide to our troubles is an author who fits nicely into all the recent rummaging in theory and precedent—Robert Filmer (d. 1654). Filmer was a country gentleman from Kent who enjoyed scribbling essays on a variety of topics. The reputation of his most interesting essay, *Patriarcha*, was entirely posthumous. English Tories published it for the first time in the 1680s on the eve of the Glorious Revolution (John Locke attacked it); American Tories revived its arguments again in 1775, on the eve of the American Revolution; and apologists for slavery discovered it a third time during the Civil War. The White House legal team made no use of it, but it describes the president's situation, and ours.

Filmer thought the pattern for all human society was patriarchal. Men needed to be ruled, or they would tear one another like beasts, and the only legitimate rulers were father-kings, descended from Adam. In any given "multitude" of men, the true patriarch might be unknown, his place usurped. But he was there, and God would lift him up, in His own good time.

As the historian Forrest McDonald pointed out, Filmer never persuaded anyone by eloquence or logic, since he possessed neither. (Why should Adam be the fount of authority, considering how he bungled the job in Eden?) But Filmer lasted because he articulated widely held assumptions—and, I would add, reflected certain psychological realities.

Men crave direction, and a small number have the ability to supply it (a far smaller number have the ability to do so justly). When they appear, in the form of heroes, we give them a more than rational allegiance. Filmer muddies the question with fundamentalist genealogy, but the need to be ruled and the yearning to seek rule in father figures will persist as long as men are not angels, and as long as they have childhoods.



Such ways of thinking are anathema to our laws, and rightly so, for even the greatest heroes are men, subject to human limitations, so the best they can do is limited. Heroic leadership cannot be routinized, or prescribed. But our political practice must always keep an eye on the patriarchal situation—aware of the needs that underlie it, and willing to let them be gratified. If we ignore patriarchal impulses, they don't go away. They come back, in degenerate forms. The more we deny them, the more unpleasant the recurrence. This is what Bill Clinton and his popularity represent.

The feminist abuser; the pro-V-chip thong-snapper; the guardian of children and pawer of interns; the war protester who bombs aspirin factories; the wonk meritocrat surrounded by thugs, cronies, and consiglieri—everything Bill Clinton professes to be, he is not. And everything his supporters fear in the enemies they look to him to keep at bay, they hail when it happens on his watch. Clinton is known for appropriating Republican policies (welfare reform, free trade). But this is traditional reverse-field politics, as old as Disraeli, or Jefferson ("we are all federalists"). More interestingly, Clinton incarnates liberals' worst fantasies about masculine and traditional authority, but because he does it in the style of an undisciplined boy, they are content to behave like children. Although the legal basis of his impeachment and trial was not "just sex," his popularity most definitely is about the sexual symbolism of patriarchal politics. For over a year we have been arguing about the king's scepter.

This is bad, and it's not likely to get better anytime soon. Maturity is not going to be fostered by popular culture, with its Spielbergs and Lucases, its history for the ignorant and fairy tales for morons. The antecedents of Clintonism are not the creation of liberals only. If only liberals were responsible for Clinton, he would be as popular as Michael Dukakis. Clinton's America is not, as Rep. Barr said, some other country. It's his, and ours. Specifically, what conservatives have contributed to our situation is that part of Reaganism that ran from Mike Deaver, Reagan's producer, on out to Jerry Zipkin, Mrs. Reagan's socialite walker—the feel-good, be-happy self-esteem splurge of the Eighties. (Reagan's sunny personality fit with the nonsense, but he himself had a stubborn, don't-care streak he could show to welfare queens or Communists). The ideologues of ga-ga Reaganism were the snake-handling supply-siders, declaring (in Jude Wanniski's words) that the electorate is always right. Bill Clinton and Dick Morris learned the lesson well; that is why they take so many polls.

What is the half of the glass that is full? That in 1998 and 1999, the case against Clinton got as far as it got. In the face of peace and prosperity, Clinton's political

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skills, Filmer's fourth revival, polls pointing to clemency and indifference, and conventional wisdom pointing insistently to the polls, there was still enough residual integrity in institutions and in the political classes to bring an obvious perjurer and sicko to a Senate trial.

Of course the motives of Clinton's enemies were, in part, partisan. That is how the system works. "Ambition must

■

Clinton incarnates liberals' worst fantasies about masculine and traditional authority. Yet . . .

■

be made to counteract ambition," wrote James Madison in the *Federalist Papers*. Madison wanted conflicting ambitions, it is true, to be channeled through opposing branches of government rather than parties. But four years after writing these words, he and his rivals were busy setting up the first parties. What was good enough for Madison and Hamilton is good enough for Henry Hyde. It is also true that the laws whose violations Clinton's critics cited—the independent-counsel statute and modern sexual-harassment laws—are bad laws. But they are on the books; Clinton supported them. What's good for every other American is good enough for Bill Clinton, unless patriarchy is to triumph in form as well as in spirit. The House Republicans gave a good shot in a good cause.

History will not be kind to Clinton. As a friend of mine said, being impeached is like drinking strontium-90. It kills slowly. On December 29, as is the custom on every past president's birthday, the White House sent a bouquet to the grave of Andrew Johnson. The clever reporters who staked out the site noticed that on the commemorative plaque, the words describing Johnson as the only president to have been impeached had been taped over, against the day when the plaque would be unscrewed and sent back to the shop for repair. It is the sign of things to come. The Clinton presidential library will be a lonely spot. When the odd visitor comes, Sidney Blumenthal, the curator and resi-

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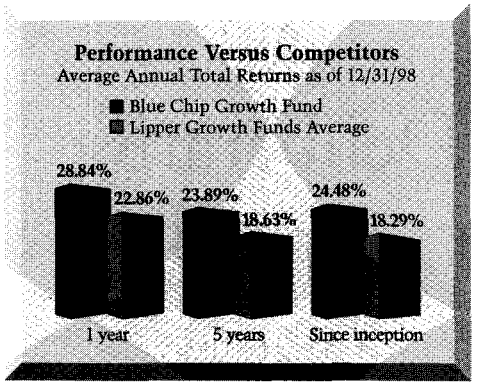

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dent scholar, will try to interest him in Vice President Gore's report on restructuring government, or in the pen that signed the legislation for midnight basketball. The visitor will instead ask to see the Gap dress.

Bill Clinton has lost the war of reputation and nearly lost the battle to hold on to the only thing he understands: his power. As the Duke of Wellington said of Waterloo, it was a damn close run thing. **NR**

■ **THE SCANDAL II** ■

All Deliberative Speed

A Senate diary.

MARK STEYN

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1999

TWO years ago, Bill Clinton's State of the Union address had to share a split TV screen with the final moments of the O. J. civil trial. Today, the president took no chances and split his own screen: over in the House, an unprecedented address; back in the Senate trial, an undressed president.

While the speech went swimmingly, in the Senate the president has been running into some unexpected roadblocks. Early today, the word was that three Democrats from the House Judiciary Committee would be joining the Clinton defense team, including John Conyers of Michigan. He's the ranking Judiciary Democrat best known for advancing the sophisticated legal argument that the Republicans are "clinical psychopaths." But he is African-American and his recruitment to the Senate defense team added, as CNN noted approvingly, "a certain amount of diversity"—the latest refrain on the Clinton side.

Mr. Steyn is a columnist for Britain's *Daily Telegraph* and Canada's *National Post*.

"Look at those Republican managers," a Senate aide scoffs. "They're all white males."

"Yes, but the president's a white male," I say. "So's your senator. So are you."

"What's your point?" he says.

But diversity was not to be. Unwilling to countenance the sullying of the chamber by his crazier House colleagues, Democratic senator Robert Byrd, the soi-disant "constitutional solon," nixed Conyers's appearance. For Monica Year Two, it's hello, solon; so long, foaming partisans. Whether this indicates the octogenarian Sen. Byrd is turning against the president is hard to say. He spent most of the day's presentation glowering at Clinton counsel Charles Ruff. Then I caught his eye and he glowered at me. But, just as you're thinking he's one of nature's glowerers, he strolls over to Sen. Blanche Lincoln and rubs the small of her back. Will the president be given the Byrd glower or the back rub? Clinton could probably use the latter right now.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 1999

And, soon enough, he gets it. Today, Byrd threw in the towel. To prolong the trial, he said, "will only foster more of the same hallway press conferences" and delay the start of "the process of healing." The Secret Service agent who stands behind me in the press gallery carries a big black bag full of gas masks, "in the event of airborne chemical attack." As the clouds of stale verbiage begin wafting up from Byrd's statement, I turn to grab a gas mask, but, with the air thick with senatorial compromise, the agent has fled in terror.

Friends of the president are now urging him again not "to overplay his hand"—a vivid image in the context of this president—as he did in Africa when he heard the Paula Jones case had been dismissed and got out the cigar and bongos (that's a reference to tobacco products and percussion instruments, not to the unwanted sexual advance that got him into this mess in the first place). But he doesn't need to pound his own bongos anymore, when all the liberal Democrats he's disdained for six years are lining up to do it for him. Whatever the reason, if Bill Clinton could put together a legislative coalition as loyal as his obstruction-of-justice coalition, he'd be unstoppable.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1999

She had, as is her wont, been keeping her head down, but on Saturday, at the behest of a federal judge, Monica Lewinsky returned to Washington for a "debriefing" with House managers (that means an interview, not that her thong's been subpoenaed). I left the vast open prairies of the Senate press gallery, grabbed a taxi, and, as we pulled up back at my hotel, found to my surprise the sidewalk jammed with a heaving mob of reporters and cameramen. I raised my hand. "Boys, please," I said. "You know I won't do cable." But they trampled me into the dust and stampeded after a shapeless figure in baseball cap and baggy coat. Of all the hotels in all the towns in all the world, Monica had walked into mine.

They say the camera adds ten pounds, so, given that there were 38 cameras around, Monica looked pretty much as you'd expect. The doormen, who've had the best part of 50 bucks in tips from me, shoved me aside and hustled their starrier guest through the marble lobby. Disentangling myself from the candelabra, I struggled to overhear any penetrating insights she might have. As far as I could tell, she said, "It was so, like, y'know, I mean . . ." Those gravitas guys in the Senate are going to love her. Monica's minders didn't seem eager to have me share their elevator, and, as I was heading to the basement gym, I waited for the next one.

"Going down?" I asked the lady.

"I beg your pardon?" she said indignantly.

You have to sympathize. Now, whenever an 87-year-old white-haired dowager with a walker totters out to the street, the media scrum yells "Monica!" just on the off chance. They did it to me on Saturday evening, which, even though I'm not exactly cadaverous, I found frankly insulting.

At least we now understand why the White House doesn't want witnesses—especially this witness. An epic struggle between Congressman Bryant (Republican, Yawnsville) and presidential counsel Greg Craig (senior partner, Snoozeberg and Comatoze) is never going to grab the public imagination.

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This case needs a star—and that's the threat Monica represents.

MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 1999

Today began with The World's Greatest Deliberative Body deliberating whether to move a motion to dismiss, a motion to dismiss the motion to dismiss, a motion to dismiss the motion to dismiss and split it into two motions to dismiss twice, or—in a spirit of bipartisan compromise—a motion to dismiss all debate on the motion to dismiss. Eventually bipartisan agreement was reached. Today, after the move to dismiss, they move to dat miss—Monica Lewinsky and the vexed question of live witnesses. But for now the defense rests (in the legal sense; behind the scenes, Larry Flynt is still putting in a full day's work tracking down video footage of senators and their Filipino houseboys). In a forceful summary, Nicole Seligman, counsel to Bill Clinton, insisted that the president is completely innocent on the following grounds:

a) He was telling the truth when he denied that he'd told the truth about whether he'd lied. To suggest that he lied when he lied to the grand jury about lying in the civil deposition is quite simply untrue.

b) It would do a grave disservice to the dignity and solemnity of this august body for senators to haggle over oral sex in the well of the chamber. The proper place for senators to haggle over oral sex is in the well of their massage parlor.

c) Our defense team has a person of color (African-American Cheryl Mills), a person of gender (Ms. Seligman), a person of disability (wheelchair-bound Charles Ruff), and a person of hogwash (authentic Arkansas swamp-gibberish-hound Dale Bumpers): We look like America. The prosecution look like uptight, sexually repressed Rotarian nerds.

d) Did we mention Bill Clinton's grandfather sold groceries to African-Americans?

In any case, one by one the chickens have all come home to their Democrat roost. Senators Joe Lieberman, Bob Kerrey, and Pat Moynihan, all of whom spoke out against the president last August, have fallen into line. Fritz Hollings, *still* the junior senator from South Carolina, was also tipped as a pos-

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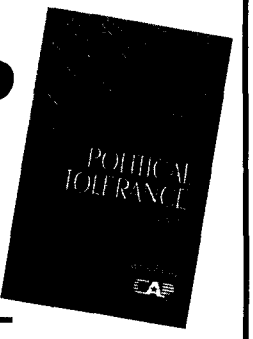

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sible defector: He's assumed to loathe Clinton, mainly on grounds that he loathes everybody else.

But now Sen. Hollings, in his stately southern drawl, has pronounced: "Theah ox is ean theah ditch." "The ox is in the ditch" is an old piece of Carolina folk-wisdom meaning, if I understand correctly, that there's a ditch and it has an ox in it. Ol' Fritz uses the phrase often, without making it plain quite what its broader application is. Possibly, when the ox is in the ditch, he can't get out by himself, without the farmer and the, er, oxhand pulling together in a bipartisan fashion. The ox is presumably the House managers' case, not the president, who is, um, the bull and is back in the cowshed with the milkmaid. But if, as Iowa's Tom Harkin says, the House case is "a pile of dung," wouldn't the ditch be a good place to leave it?

■

Most Americans have never seen a white Republican man talking to an African-American woman.

■

TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 1999

Today, I caught another glimpse of the temporarily interned intern. Monica is ample, but she's not Godzilla, she's not King Kong or even Queen Thong. Yet grown senators are fleeing in terror. Thump! Thump! Thump! Queen Thong's pounding down Pennsylvania Avenue, she's climbing up the Capitol dome, she's tossing Republican leaders around like matchsticks, she's snapping their spines and hurling them to the ground . . .

. . . Oh, hang on. Republican leaders don't have any spines.

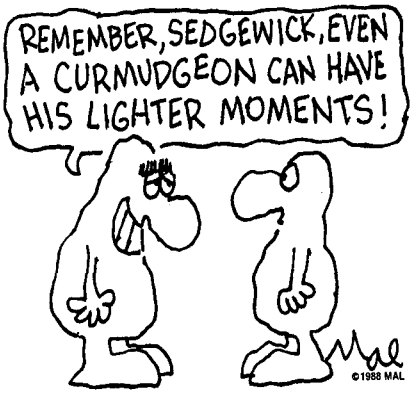
In the Senate, things were going so well for the White House that it even let Clinton counsel David Kendall off the leash. Today, he fairly dripped sarcasm for the House impeachment managers. For days now, the conventional wisdom has been that the House boys are hicks, while the Clinton team are slickers. The House hicks had been limited to picking three witnesses, and the slickers were withering in their contempt: To modify a famous *Variety* headline, "SLICKS NIX HICKS' PICKS."

As Kendall sniped on, GOP senators began to feel insulted. They'd done their discreet and dignified best to cave in to the president. That's why Betty Currie wasn't on the witness list. She'd been vetoed by Republican senators who feared the sight of House prosecutors questioning a black woman would unnerve the American people: Presumably, most of them have never seen a white Republican man talking to an African-American woman. The president must be kicking himself for not hitting on the black interns: If Monica were a person of color, those guilt-ridden Senate honkies wouldn't dare call her. But, as usual, he and his cronies were too cocky. Republican senators are resigned to Clinton's escaping the noose, but they still have an eye on the Constitution and posterity: They'll put up with a bad president but not a bad precedent. So, despite being given smaller and smaller hoops to jump through, somehow the House impeachment hicks have managed to wiggle through to the next round.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1999

On Tuesday, Democrats said Republicans were flogging a dead horse. (I believe Larry Flynt has video footage of Republicans flogging a dead horse in an upscale Washington S&M dungeon.) By this morning the horse was in stable condition, as Robert Byrd's motion to dismiss was defeated and Republicans voted to depose witnesses.

And there's even some bipartisanship in evidence. In fact, from where I'm sitting, I see quite a lot of it. Ninety-six-year-old Strom Thurmond, as befits the Senate's president pro tem, is bipartisan to a fault.



The president's attorneys are seated just in front of the old boy, and, during each break in the proceedings, he's a pillar of, er, evenhandedness. No sooner does the chief justice declare a 15-minute interlude than Sen. Thurmond totters up to Clinton's two lady lawyers, pats them down, strokes their elbows, takes their hands in both of his, and refuses to let go until the gavel comes down. Cheryl Mills, the president's fetching African-American attorney, smiles nervously, marveling no doubt at how far the senator has come since his 1948 segregationist campaign for the White House and, indeed, how far he's willing to go to demonstrate in a very real sense his personal commitment to integrating with the black community. Thurmond's other jailbait nymphette, 41-year-old Nicole Seligman, stares thoughtfully at his hair plugs and makes a mental note to warn her client that this is what he'll look like in half-a-century if he doesn't cut out the womanizing. In recent days, ol' Strom's taken to bringing oranges and apples for Nicole and Cheryl. In a further display of bipartisanship, he may well offer them a ride home.

This may be why the Senate is reluctant to move to live witnesses. The sight of Monica's abundant bosom heaving a few feet from his desk might place too great a strain on Strom's fruit basket. Indeed, considering how Clinton counsel David Kendall went out of his way to introduce Ms. Seligman to Sen. Thurmond, you wonder whether White House strategy isn't to lure the old goat into committing his own impeachable offense.

Still, they're not happy about the latest turn of events. Spokesmen are now threatening, as they put it, "Armageddon." No more Mr. Nice Guy. No more scrupulous compliance with subpoena requests, no more complete and truthful testimony, no more respect and deference to independent counsel Kenneth Starr. Now the gloves are coming off, instead of the pants. To depose witnesses, says Kendall, would unleash "the genie from the bottle."

Pandora's boxer shorts, once dropped, are not easily pulled up again. **NR**

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■ PUBLIC POLICY ■

Values Statism

How Clinton is reviving liberalism.

RAMESH PONNURU

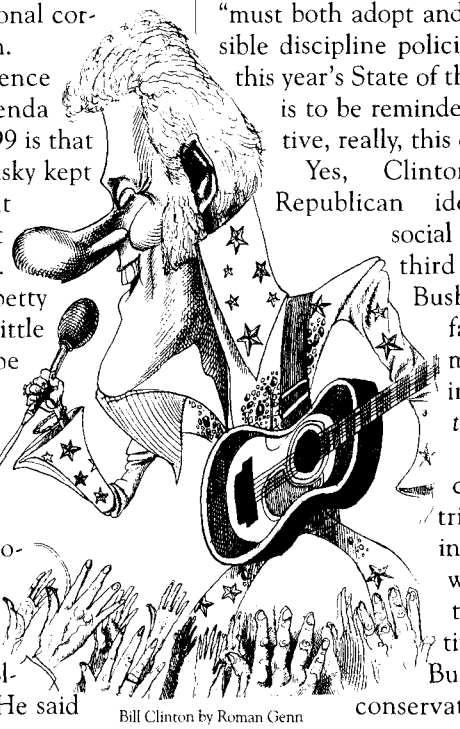
PRESIDENT Clinton's latest State of the Union address has inspired two reactions among Republicans. The first is to accuse him once again of stealing their ideas (the latest loot being missile defense). The second, more prevalent, is to accuse him of returning to the era of big government (whose end he proclaimed in his 1996 address). These accusations are, one hopes, contradictory. And neither is likely to cause Clinton much trouble.

Clinton has not returned to big government for the simple reason that he never left it in the first place, except rhetorically. A review of Clinton's 1998 address—the state of the union was "strong" then too, by the way—gives the lie to the notion that he has suddenly lurched left to keep his base from abandoning him to the impeachers. Last year he called for expanding Medicare to cover 55-to-64-year-olds. This year he repeated that demand. Child-care subsidies? In both speeches. Ditto for the minimum-wage hike, the health-care "bill of rights," the linkage of free trade to international regulation, school construction, campaign-finance reform, and so on.

Spending hundreds of billions of dollars to retire the national debt may not be a good way of "saving Social Security," but it is a liberal policy only in that it keeps taxes from being cut (and, by reducing interest payments, allows for more spending on programs). Again, though, Clinton first used Social Security as a ruse to stop tax cuts last year. The only big new government power-grab—and it is, admittedly, really big—is Clinton's dead-on-arrival proposal for the government, rather than individuals, to invest a portion of the Social Security surplus in the private sector. The rest of his agenda, by comparison, was small change, e.g., a domestic version of OPIC, the international corporate-welfare program.

The salient difference between Clinton's agenda of 1998 and that of 1999 is that last year Monica Lewinsky kept him from promoting it effectively: His throat was stuck, for a change. Fending off all of his petty advances—his lots of little government—will be harder this year.

Take his five-point proposal for an Education Accountability Act. Clinton condemned "social promotion," the practice of promoting failing students to keep them with their peers and bolster their self-esteem. He said that poorly performing schools had to be turned around or shut down. Teachers should learn the subjects they teach (and implicitly not just education theory). "We must empower parents with more information and more choices," he said. And school districts "must both adopt and implement sensible discipline policies." To listen to this year's State of the Union address is to be reminded how conservative, really, this country still is.



Bill Clinton by Roman Genn

Yes, Clinton is stealing Republican ideas; abolishing social promotion was a third of George W. Bush's platform last fall. But even more, he is stealing conservative *themes*. Using federal subsidies to cajole local districts and states into changing their ways is not a traditionally conservative policy.

But the public's conservatism is a conser-

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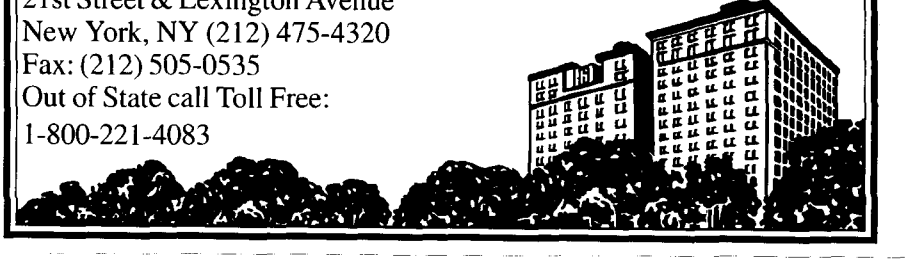

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vatism of values, and it is heedless of which institutions implement it. If conservatives argue that no education policy, however sensible in itself, should be imposed on all schools by the federal government, the public will probably tune them out. Nor will they make much headway with the argument that any attempt to do so will be hijacked by interest groups and ultimately subvert conservative values.

Clintonism is often described as economic conservatism combined with social liberalism—William Kristol recently described it as "Wall Street economics and left-wing identity politics"—but the truth is closer to the reverse. As a matter of coalition-building, fealty to Wall Street on Federal Reserve, currency, and trade policy is easily the most dispensable element of Clintonism. The major advantage of these policies, besides their popularity with big campaign donors, is that they work. For the public, the results are more popular than the means. Nor has Clinton been a particularly ardent practitioner of identity politics: He opposed same-sex marriage and defended racial preferences mainly on integrationist rather than multicultural grounds.

Clinton's real innovation has been to marry a soft social conservatism with an expansive view of the role of government. Unlike Republicans, he starts by identifying a popular value—stability, work, family, etc.—and then devises a policy that seems to embody it. Here's a perfect example of values-statism from his speech: "Finally, on the matter of work, parents should never have to face discrimination in the workplace. So I want to ask Congress to prohibit companies from refusing to hire or promote workers simply because they have children." Mom-and-apple-pie meets EEOC caseworker.

Republicans tend to attribute Bill Clinton's success to his personal skills and not to this political formula. But it is quite possible that Clintonian politics can succeed without the Clintonian persona. It worked in California last year for Gray Davis, who became the state's first Democratic governor in 16 years. Republicans are saying that California no longer sets national political trends, but this too may be a delusion. The GOP's candidate, Dan Lungren, was considered strong because of personal attributes (as is Gov. Bush today). But Lungren campaigned on yesterday's issues, as if Davis were a soft-on-crime cultural liberal like Jerry Brown—which is like campaigning against Bill Clinton as if he were George McGovern.

Davis, meanwhile, was considered a weak candidate: boring, stiff, a party hack, but disciplined. Remind you of anyone? **NR**

■ **RHETORIC** ■

Compassion Play

Message: I care more than you do.

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

WHEN George the First visited New Hampshire at the start of the 1992 campaign, he had been told that his presidential reputation was unfortunately one of preppie unconcern for the plight of the recession-hit state. So he consulted the advice of his pollsters and speechwriters, and at his first public meeting he read out their joint prescription for improving his political image.

"Message," he said, "I care."

This was, to be sure, rather more condensed and brusque than his advisors had intended. It was a précis of what they wanted the president to say, rather than the full detailed heartfelt expression of his compassionate feelings towards the people of New Hampshire.

Yet for that very reason—because it is such a pure and distilled essence—it tells us a great deal about Mr. Bush's politics, that "compassionate conservatism" which, transmitted to his sons, we have been hearing so much about lately.

Compare Mr. Bush's words to another famous remark made by a preppie in high places on a visit to a distressed area. Only a few days before his abdication in 1936, King Edward VIII, now better known by his later title, the Duke of Windsor, spent a day in South Wales, then hit by the full force of the Depression. Visibly moved by the terrible poverty of the miners, more than half of whom were unemployed, he turned to an aide and said: "Something must be done."

The passive mood in that sentence has all the strangulated reticence of British royalty, which, at moments of sexual passion, presumably murmurs, "One does love you." But it was at least an expression of concern for other people, rather than an advertisement for the King's own decency. And it called for action, however vague, instead of leaving the impression that caring was itself a sort of policy.

In Mr. Bush's message, compassion was a self-interested political strategy, or it was at least heavily blended with self-interest—less compassion than compassioneering. Nor is the former president unique among politicians in having exploited compassion for his own ends (though it is to his credit that he did it so incompetently). Whatever its value as a private virtue, or even as a private motive inspiring public action as with Edward VIII, compassion is almost invariably vitiated when it enters politics. It is ineffective as a political tactic and deceitful as a public ideal.

Let us examine it first as a political tactic—the "compassionate conservatism" of George the Second of Texas. To begin with, there is something tinny and awkward about someone assuring us that he possesses some good quality. Imagine our reaction if Bill Clinton were to begin a discussion of his draft-dodging with the words: "Message: I'm brave." We would instantly sense that he was trying to compensate for a deficiency—whether a real deficiency or only the suspicion of one in the audience's mind. As Emerson put it: "The louder he talked of his honor, the faster we counted our spoons."

For that reason, when the British Tories erected election posters proclaiming "Conservatives Care," they were drawing attention to a weakness. No one believes that Republicans are more compassionate than Democrats, or more

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likely to favor schemes of generous social provision, or more attuned to the feminine side of human nature. Their characteristic virtues are the masculine ones of patriotism, responsibility, self-reliance, and probity. People vote for them because they want to be protected against criminals and foreigners, taxed less, and governed both more lightly and more efficiently. Thus, one of the most successful Tory slogans was "Conservative Freedom Works," because it crystallized what the public saw as the party's strengths—especially after a period of socialist inefficiency.

So when George the Second advances the notion of a "compassionate conservatism," he is conceding that most conservatives are not known principally for their warmheartedness. But he is also excluding himself from the general indictment—and, again, people sense this. When Nancy Reagan heard George the First use the phrase "a kinder, gentler America," she asked perceptively, "Kinder and gentler than who, exactly?" These are the political tactics of the Pharisee: Lord, Lord, I thank thee that I am not as the publican . . . And though such an appeal may play in the general election, it may not be the wisest approach to the Republican primaries.

Compassion as a public ideal is a form of sentimentality. It draws attention to the fine feelings of the compassionate politician. Until recently politicians would stress what warmhearted fellows they were mainly in reference to the social benefits they were dispensing. Today, however, their sentimentality is purer. They cite their empathy alone as justification for their brand of politics. If someone is doing badly and they feel bad about it, then they must be good—and good for us.

But as *Faking It*, a valuable collection of essays edited by Digby Anderson on the rise of sentimentality, points out, such public figures do not even feel the emotions they exhibit. When Bill Clinton feels our pain, his real emotion is mild self-satisfaction at his own sensitivity. This is hardly surprising. No painful or expensive effort is personally expected from those who feel compassion stir in their breast. The inward grace of feeling, or the outward sign of tears, is all that is required. The important thing is that they "care."

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Insofar as action is demanded, that is the province of government. As the old joke goes, compassion is "A getting together with B to decide what C shall do for X." In such circumstances, caring costs nothing—and so, as economists would predict, we get a surplus of it.

Yet caring is irrelevant, perhaps even counterproductive, when it comes to actually helping those in distress. The great Victorian reformers, like Florence Nightingale, were not weepy souls but rather waspish people who bullied their patients quite as much as the government departments that stood in their way. They were irritated by waste and folly far more than they were moved by tender compassion.

Similarly, the so-called "caring professions" are notorious for their callousness about clients. It could hardly be otherwise. If a nurse in an intensive-care unit allowed herself to respond emotionally to the desperately ill people brought in every day, she would have a nervous breakdown in a week. That is presumably why Marvin Olasky and Arianna Huffington called their organization "The Center for *Effective* Compassion," implying that what matters is not caring deeply but helping effectively.

For when caring is the criterion, we get social policies that encourage illegitimacy, foster crime, and increase poverty. We judge their effectiveness by whether they make their recipients not better and more self-reliant, but briefly richer and less discontented. The compassion of the secretary for health and human services is estimated by the amount of "new money" he squeezes out of the Treasury. And our caring self-esteem is unaffected—no, increased—by a waste of human lives that would have driven Florence Nightingale to write 20 letters to the *Times*.

Interestingly, the practical example most commonly cited of George the Second's "compassionate conservatism" falls with almost eerie precision into this category—namely, his support for bilingual education. Trumpeted as a sign of his sensitivity to Hispanic concerns, it will in fact hold back Hispanic children in the economy and prolong the poverty of Hispanic families. (A Marxist would argue, of course, that such is the natural result and maybe the purpose of anything called "compassionate conservatism.")

I suppose that another George will come along in due course—which is alarming, because, by my calculations, the next one loses America altogether. **NR**

■ ABROAD ■

Butcher Boy

Milosevic unleashed.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

COMMUNIST Yugoslavia collapsed along with its big brother, the Soviet Union, and out of its ruins stepped the chilling figure of Slobodan Milosevic. Literally overnight, he transformed himself from Communist hack into Serbian nationalist, and he has since acquired absolute power in Belgrade and a personal fortune too. He is to the Balkans what Saddam Hussein is to the Middle East.

Violent and unscrupulous men are easily able to exploit Yugoslavia. Never a real country, and even less a real state, it has always been a scattering of different peoples, shaken by events like a kaleidoscope into fresh patterns. Serbs are Orthodox Christians, and on account of their greater numbers overall, they have taken the lead culturally and politically, and believe in their divine right to do so. The adjoining Croats and Slovenes are Catholics, while most Bosnians and Albanians are Muslims. Immemorially, invasion and conquest have settled all their mutual relationships.

In what looks more and more like the good old days, the Ottoman Turks kept the peace with their version, imperfect but workable, of a pluralist society. After the Ottoman empire broke up in the connected wars of the early years of the century, the post-1918 American and European governments agreed through several treaties to amalgamate as many peoples as possible into a new entity to

Mr. Pryce-Jones has written widely on world politics and cultures.

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be called Yugoslavia, much as a clumsy potter might try to glue together pieces of a smashed plate.

Hitler redrew these frontiers after 1941 to suit himself. The S.S. dealt with objectors. Imposing himself in his turn, the Communist Marshal Tito redesigned the country on the Soviet model, to give each of the constituent peoples its own republic, on paper independent within a federation, but in practice under strong central control. Once again the secret police dealt with objectors in what became a mini-Gulag.

Ringed by mountains, and landlocked, Kosovo is a spectacular region, and rich—famous since Roman days for its mineral deposits. As a result of the movements of history and demography, Kosovo in this century has come to be inhabited by some 2 million ethnic Albanians, but only 200,000 Serbs. In granting Kosovo the special status of "autonomous republic," Tito made a concession to its ethnic composition. Kosovar Albanians were allowed some minimal rights, at least where their language and schools were concerned. How to reconcile the 90 percent but powerless majority with the ruling 10 percent minority was, and remains, the core of the issue.

Between the wars, prominent Serb intellectuals resented the ethnic imbalance, and they proposed to resolve it by forcing Albanians to emigrate, and wiping out those who refused to leave. Milosevic is their enthusiastic heir. For the sake of a Greater Serbia, he first waged war against the Croats and then the Bosnians. Both these peoples, given the tools, are well able to take care of themselves, but for reasons that nobody has yet been able to clarify, the European powers refused to arm them for self-defense, in effect backing Milosevic. In both cases, American intervention alone brought about a stalemate, by arming the Croats and then bombing the Serbs into submitting to the Dayton Agreement, the foundation for the present surly cease-fire in Bosnia.

Well aware that he was escalating the issue, Milosevic decreed that Kosovo also was integral to Greater Serbia, and the Albanians could no longer be allowed their previous rights. This was a provocation to countries with a common border or common interests: Albania proper, Greece and Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania. Ethnic Albanians also form a third of the population of Macedonia, where Milosevic can set off a full-scale Balkan war. Like Saddam Hussein, he believes he can best fulfill his ambitions by precipitating an international crisis.

In the person of Ibrahim Rugova, the Kosovar Albanians found a spokesman of stature. An academic with a training in France, and a beret aslant on his head to show for it, he insisted that civil rights had to be respected but violence avoided. Resorting to military measures to enforce his will, Milosevic exposed Rugova as an idealist, hopelessly out of touch. If the Kosovar Albanians were to gain their rights, they too would have to fight.

The Kosovar Liberation Army is a popular uprising of Albanians. Its leaders are shadowy, its members local volunteers. Possessing rifles but no heavy weapons, they are unable to inflict serious damage on Serbs who have tanks and attack helicopters. Like the Bosnians before them, they could give a good account of themselves if they were properly armed. Like the Bosnians again, though, they have been unable to find an outside power to sponsor them, and so must face their ordeal as best they can. Naturally they now reject autonomy and demand complete independence.

In Kosovo today, in one village after another, as a matter of routine, Serb police and special forces are massacring men, women, and children for no reason except that they are ethnic Albanians. An estimated 300,000 have fled their homes in fear of their lives. Fifty years after Hitler and Stalin, mass murder remains the policy of choice for Milosevic. Fifty years after the founding of the United Nations for the purpose of ensuring that organized atrocities were a thing of the past, the world community stands aside, in moral confusion. Kofi Annan, the U.N. secretary general, regularly burbles that the threat of force is "essential" to bringing the two sides together. In a cavalcade of official cars, the American special envoy, Richard Holbrooke, calls on Milosevic in Belgrade, and so does the NATO supreme commander, Gen. Wesley Clark. They and the international politicians of the so-called Contact Group issue statements to the effect that Milosevic must be induced, no, really, obliged, to behave. Nothing happens. Evidently the political will does not exist in America or Europe to put a stop to this savagery.

NATO bombing may do to Kosovo what it did to Bosnia. Admittedly expensive and challenging, only intervention on the ground can prevent the spread of murder. That would be the necessary prelude to a lengthy and arduous process of arranging some compromise between autonomy and independence, whereby Serbs and Albanians can live together. Unable to construct itself out of peoples of differing cultures, Yugoslavia, in other words, is back where it was in 1918, in need of statesmen to give it appropriate form through international treaty, this time successfully.

But there are no such statesmen. President Clinton has distractions. Months and months of hesitation had to pass before he could bring himself to move in Bosnia. Besides, he can argue legitimately that Europeans should take responsibility for events in Europe.

The governments of Europe, however, are preoccupied with the project of creating a federal union, whose justification is prosperity and safety for everyone within the magic protectionist circle. Democratic principles of consent are being flouted, rendering the legitimacy of the whole proceeding flimsy. Once again, peoples of different cultures and religions are being obliged to participate in a union put together as Yugoslavia was in 1918, by treaties that ignore realities on the ground. It is the starkest of ironies that at such a moment they should have to confront the blood-stained death-throes of the Yugoslav federal union. Kosovo is so grim an omen of the future that European politicians prefer to look away from the corpses and pass by on the other side.

Mass murder as perpetrated by Milosevic and his special forces thus comes to be downgraded as merely unfortunate, distasteful, the sort of misconduct expected in foreign parts. It raises in fact a fundamental ethical question about the kind of world we are to inhabit. The absence of morality and leadership in response to Milosevic is evidence of degeneracy in the democracies of the West. And who knows how many people are going to have to pay for it with their lives. **NR**

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THE SDI IMPERATIVE

Thank the North Koreans. Their launch of a three-stage ballistic missile on August 31—just seven days after Joint Chiefs chairman Hugh Shelton said that "the intelligence community can provide the necessary warning" if a rogue state is developing "an ICBM threat to the United States"—has finally concentrated minds on the need for missile defense. President Clinton has asked for a $6.6 billion increase in missile-defense spending. Defense secretary William Cohen has declared that the administration is willing to modify or withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty that hobbles development of a defense.

But the White House has backtracked from Cohen's remarks, calling the treaty "a cornerstone of strategic stability." It would be more accurate to describe it as a millstone carried over from the Cold War. Our treaty partner, the Soviet Union, no longer exists. The treaty is thus both legally invalid and strategically obsolete. When Ronald Reagan proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative, liberals argued that no space-based shield could possibly block thousands of Soviet missiles; by creating a false sense of security, they said, the initiative would actually render us less safe. Whatever the merits of this argument then, it does not apply to the likes of North Korea and Iraq. Nor would missile defense destabilize a "balance of terror" between two superpowers.

In the post-Soviet world, missile defense is indispensable for stability. An undefended America is vulnerable to nuclear blackmail, as are its allies: Would the Gulf War coalition have stayed together if Saddam Hussein had in 1990 been able to threaten Paris? Or New York? By reducing the effectiveness of such blackmail, missile defense would make it less worthwhile for aggressors to acquire nuclear weapons. Nuclear non-proliferation has been a goal especially cherished of liberals. Hence the eloquent advocacy of missile defense by Jonathan Schell, a liberal and nuclear abolitionist. Defending America should not be an ideologically polarizing proposition.

Nor should expense be an objection. In almost any government program some money will be sacrified to the pork barrel or bureaucratic ineptitude. But if the program can save even a single city, this spending is money well wasted. Henry Cooper and Frank Gaffney, defense officials in the Reagan and Bush administrations, have suggested that a sea-based defense system could be purchased for $3 billion and deployed within four years. The General Accounting Office has concluded that in Clinton's version of a ground-based system the first site alone would cost between $18.4 and $28.3 billion, and take eight years to build.

Congress should declare that it is the policy of the United States to deploy a missile defense as soon as feasible. A bill to that effect sponsored by Senators Thad Cochran (R., Miss.) and Daniel Inouye (D., Hawaii) came within one vote of defeating a procedural filibuster last year. The administration should also be reminded, as it negotiates modifications to the ABM Treaty, that no arms-control process can substitute for a national-security policy. Russia cannot have a veto over our attempts to defend ourselves from North Korea.

Missile defense cannot be the whole of our security policy. It does, however, offer insurance against President Clinton's failure to make others' acquisition of weapons of mass destruction prohibitively expensive. If the administration balks at providing for our defense against Hussein and his fellow tyrants, current and future, Republicans should be willing to explain the need for missile defense to a public that will be dismayed to learn that it does not already have one. In a presidential campaign, if necessary. —*The Editors*

If Not Now, When?

Why missile defense languished.

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

I FORGET the exact year, but Caspar Weinberger was secretary of defense for President Reagan, and I asked to see him. The SecDef's office, as I remember, is surprisingly modest. I remember thinking back to an interview with Prime Minister Golda Meir, whose austere desk and utilitarian adornments would have suited Bill Gates's cubicle-minded idea of how to do business. Modest offices give off the feel that serious business gets done here.

But the ceremonial flags were in evidence, and one of the two phones on the desk connected to the Oval Office. To reach the Omaha missile-launching pads the secretary of defense presumably has to go through an operator.

We were friends, so there was a moment or two of heliocentric chatter on this or that matter involving the president, who had got tangled up in the Iran-contra business a little while before. I can't think of six times I've requested meetings with very important people, but always I am governed by the assumption that they are very busy, so you ought quickly to get to the point. I told him that I and my colleagues at NATIONAL REVIEW thought it very important to get on with Mr. Reagan's anti-missile program, which seemed stalled and was in any event critically burdened by the ABM Treaty of 1972, which accepted constraints against plausible deployment and the kind of testing that might yield atmospheric sensing and missile direction.

So what was my idea? he asked.

It was to commit ourselves publicly to share our research with the Soviet Union. I reasoned that this might have the effect of deflecting Soviet criticism of a departure fr n the iron requirements of the treaty (which they themselves were abrogating) and, most critically,

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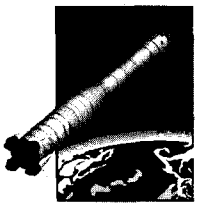
cope with the encephalophonic criticism of the disarmament lobby.

Mr. Weinberger gave one of his shy smiles, lowered his voice a little, and then told me there was a *very* good reason not to advance such an arrangement with Moscow . . . The talk became too technical for my understanding, but I got the essence of the argument. It boiled down to this: Suppose there are 26 parts to the development of an effective missile defense, the first being the mere concept of it, the twenty-sixth the finishing touch on the guidance system. Now these



It did not seem greatly to matter to the critics that a defensive shield can't kill anybody.

stages are not accosted sequentially, not in government-style emergency programs. In some situations, he said, you cannot go to work on Problem #8 without first solving Problem #7, which dictates the design of #8. But the challenges in Manhattan-type projects fan out, and different specialists work on different problems—on alert, propulsion, guidance, explosive, whatever.

Now if we were to proffer our solutions to problems #2–#18, assuming our research and testing had however eccentrically ended us up with those solutions, it could happen that the Soviet Union had already cracked #19–#26. The result of our openhandedness could theoretically be to complete the problem for the Soviet Union before we had done it for ourselves. So we were not about to risk handing Moscow a defense against our own deterrent system.

Well then, hadn't the time come to repeal the ABM Treaty in order to give us license to do the necessary testing?

Secretary Weinberger replied that that was a political judgment only the president could make.

I didn't ask him—that would have been bad form—whether he had advised our hero to proceed with rescission (all that was needed—is needed—to rescind is a diplomatic communication to the effect that the six-month countdown to the end of the treaty had this day begun). I did conclude that Caspar Weinberger thought that rescission of the treaty was not about to happen. Several years after he left office, he told me he wished he had undertaken to persuade President Reagan to proceed with repeal.

A few months after my meeting with Weinberger, I was informed that Secretary of State George Shultz wished me to lunch with him in his dining room in the State Department. I had no idea what he had in mind, but, again, we were friends, and the conversation rambled along until he addressed the subject of SDI. He told me that when Mr. Reagan had proposed the idea, in March 1983, he, Shultz, was not immediately taken with it. He did not give his reasons, but he went on to say that he was now thoroughly persuaded by it. It's not going to happen on our watch, he said, acknowledging the enormous scientific challenges. What he wished from me was any ideas I had about how to influence a successor president, in the event he was not a Republican already committed to the project—in the event he was not George Bush. I told him I thought it important to argue the merits of the idea to U.S. theologians, and reminded him that we had devoted an entire issue of NATIONAL REVIEW (April 1, 1983) to replying to the American Catholic bishops who had denounced the very existence of nuclear repositories. It is vital, I thought, to adduce the moral credentials of a defensive system, and the ethical community is on this matter the most nubile, the likeliest to respond, if the mind is open on the subject, to such arguments as might appeal to a liberal president. He agreed with me. The scientific skeptics were one problem, the critics another.

The years went by, and the surrender of the Soviet Union understandably weakened the will. But the end of the direct threat from Moscow didn't denature the criticism that had built up from the arms-control/pacifist lobby. Their first proposition, as so ably recalled in the present issue by Mark Helprin, was at the Star Wars level—it *can't be done*. The second was at the political/moral level—that the time had come to divest ourselves of massive scientific experiments that had to do with war, not peace.

SHIFTING ARGUMENTS

The tune had not changed, pre-Soviet demise, post-Soviet demise. It did not seem greatly to matter to the critics that a defensive shield can't kill anybody. Their ensuing line was that a defensive shield, in the nature of things imperfect, would encourage an aggressor to double the number of offensive weapons in order to make certain that some of them got through. When SDI advocates pointed out that rogue nations, against the lunacies of which we most immediately need to defend ourselves, are not armed with weapons numbering in the thousands, they turned back to the argument of scientific incapacity; and, most recently, to the argument that Moscow will not get on with the disarmament agreed to in the START II talks if, having failed to bring Moscow around to a joint rescission of the ABM Treaty, we proceed to back out on our own. But Mr. Clinton's change of heart (he is now, if only half-heartedly, prepared to move a program forward), as mentioned by the contributors, is an important development, no doubt affected by the findings of the

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Rumsfeld Commission. Those findings are that we have no way of knowing when an enemy is prepared to strike, or how well equipped he is to strike.

We are left to ask ourselves the question, Why have we stalled so, in pursuit of an antimissile defense? Mr. Cannon and Ambassador Kirkpatrick contribute important insights into this question, and Mr. Helprin wonderfully handles the problem of scientific modesty.

FALSE SECURITY

In the end, we must know that the critical question is seldom faced in stark language. For instance: Why is there less than resolute encouragement from the Israelis, so often, so direly threatened? A demonstration was given of the use of the Patriot missile during the Gulf War. It failed, by and large, but the idea of a missile defense was graphically reified. Mr. Frank Gaffney, the head of the Center for Security Policy and the man who has done as much as anyone to keep lit the SDI flame, believes that the Navy's Aegis system is the immediate key to defense.

But why is there something less than universal anxiety on the point, and heavily bankrolled encouragement to develop our defense? Mr. Gaffney has one answer, identical to that of Newt Gingrich. It is that the American people are under the impression that they are already protected, that if the missiles were to come in, somebody, somewhere, would keep them from landing.

Do the French and the English and the Germans believe the same thing? Paris and London and Berlin are easier to reach from Iran or Libya or Iraq than San Francisco and Chicago and Washington.

What it is, surely, is a basic spiritual inertia. It was, paradoxically, evident in the oratory of the anti-nuclear critics of the Cold War years. What it came down to, really, was a refusal to fix one's sights on any goal higher than that of biological survival. The development of the hydrogen bomb, the deployment of theater weapons, the MIRV-missile enhancement—all these spelled the contingent possibility of catastrophe. Ronald Reagan's primary contribution to the end of the Soviet threat derived from the Soviet sense of it, that if they struck, he would strike back. The ambiguist is the enemy of decisive action, whether offensive or defensive. Mr. Truman elected to drop the bomb on Hiroshima. Mr. Reagan insisted on deploying theater weapons in Europe. Truman ended the Second World War, Reagan emasculated the Soviet threat.

The articles here by Ambassador Kirkpatrick and Bill Gertz and Mark Helprin and Lou Cannon are a contribution, prompted by Frank Gaffney, to an understanding of the need to document our commitment to our freedoms by an act of faith in our scientific resources. **NR**

Target America

The United States is in the sights of rogue states.

JEANE KIRKPATRICK

A GOOD many Americans still have trouble understanding why the United States needs a missile defense—this despite the only slightly veiled threat made by a Chinese general during the Taiwan Straits crisis in 1996 to bomb Los Angeles. Since then the reach and accuracy of China's missiles have increased, with the help of generous infusions of advanced U.S. missile technology.

At the end of January, news surfaced that the Chinese army had conducted exercises against Taiwan and—most remarkably—U.S. troops in the area. Reluctant to face, much less to publicize, China's new posture and power, the Clinton administration is said to be delaying a report to Congress on these developments. It has had too great an investment in its special relationship with China and too great a stake in the long-held conviction that the United States does not need, and will not need, an effective missile defense. Meanwhile, the role of the "People's Liberation Army" in the Beijing government grows.

Kim Jong Il by Roman Genn

Nor is China the only power in the region breaking through to the production of long-range ballistic missiles. Since summer, North Korea has tested weapons capable of reaching Taipei, Tokyo, Alaska, Hawaii, and other U.S. bases in the Pacific. The North Korean *Taepo Dong 1* missile was tested over Japan last August. Moreover, Charles Kartman, the State Department official who led a recent mission to Pyongyang, said that "compelling evidence exists" that North Korea is attempting to restart its nuclear-weapons program, in spite of its 1994 "Framework Agreement" with the United States. Pyongyang's refusal to open a major facility to inspection has further heightened suspicion.

In Iran, the long-range missile *Shihab 3* was flight-tested last summer, and development is moving ahead on a still-longer-range missile, the *Shihab 4*. To its credit, the Clinton administration has worked hard to prevent Russia from aiding Iran's progress in missile technology and guidance systems. But this effort has failed.

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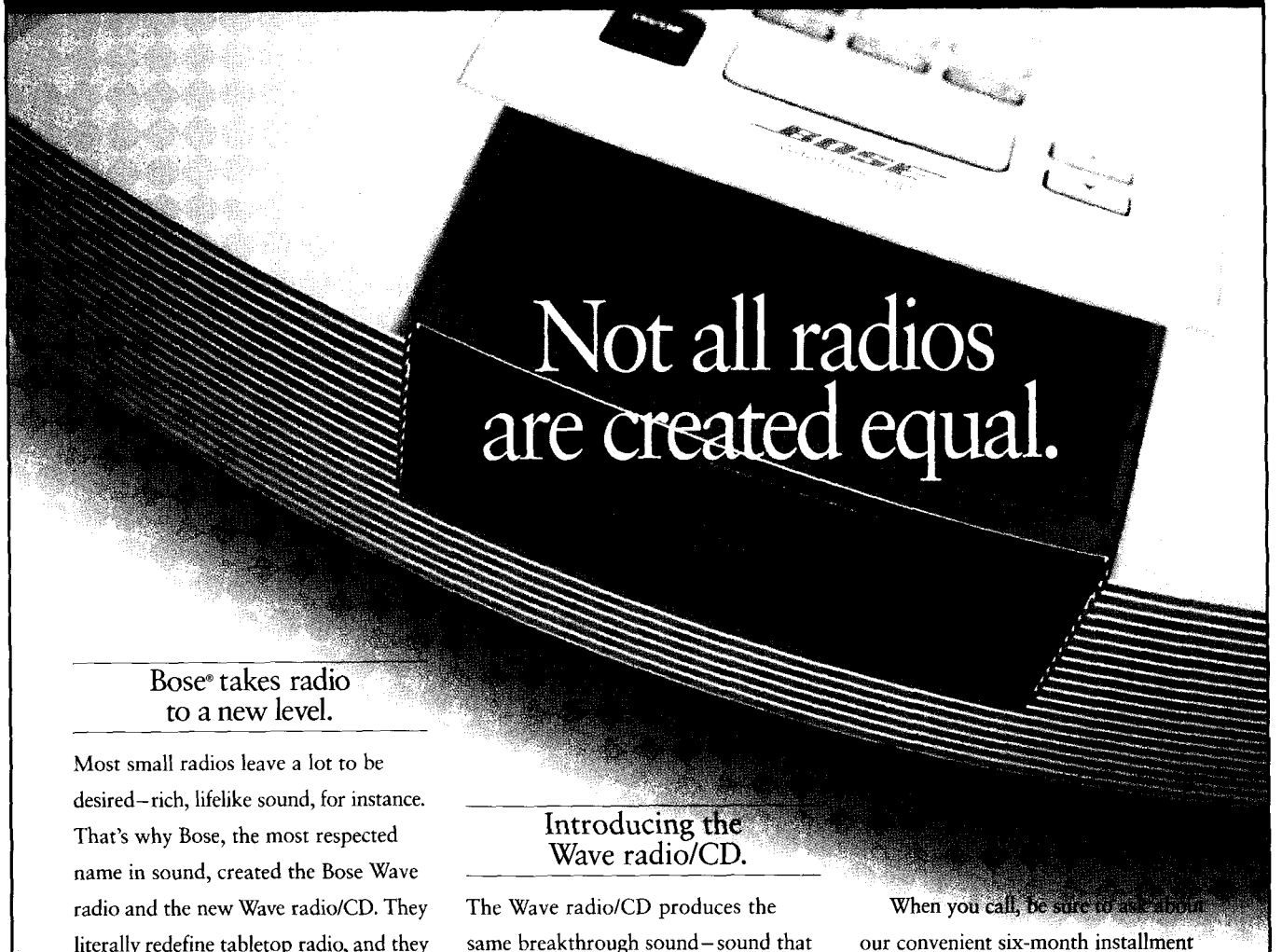

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The administration has failed, too, in Iraq, which like North Korea has broken commitments to permit inspection. No one should have forgotten that inspections after the Gulf War revealed Iraq to be much closer—dangerously closer—to production of a nuclear missile than the world had suspected. So too, India and Pakistan have established themselves as members of the nuclear club. The bipartisan Rumsfeld Commission issued a report that details these developments (one version of which is unclassified). Obviously, Americans cannot entrust their future to arms-control efforts such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty, conceived in 1968.

The International Atomic Energy Agency is also of limited help. It has done commendable work, and UNSCOM—the U.N. inspection regime—has certainly made a valuable contribution in Iraq. But the IAEA has not only failed to prevent proliferation, it has—inadvertently but repeatedly—abetted several of the most lawless rogue states in their acquisition of nuclear reactors, intended for peaceful purposes but diverted to other uses. Iraq and Iran received such help in procuring reactors. Now Cuba is again being helped by Russia with its own reactor. China, too, has been the source of technology for weapons of mass destruction. The United States has failed to stop the flow of Russian and Chinese nuclear technology to Iran. The Missile Control Regime—whose purpose is to prevent missile-technology transfer—has done little to slow proliferation.

In short, the "arms control" approach has simply not solved the problem. It has been tried, diligently and even admirably; yet it has failed.

Small wonder, then, that Secretary of Defense William Cohen declared in late January, "We are affirming that there is a threat, and the threat is growing, and we expect it will pose a danger not only to our troops overseas but to Americans here at home."

This admission was a clear departure from Clinton-administration policy. Cohen's predecessor and other Pentagon officials had claimed repeatedly that there would be no threat to the United States for at least a decade. Yet Cohen, and Lt. Gen. Lester Lyles, director of the Defense Department's Missile Defense Organization, appear to know better. Lyles avowed, following the Cohen statement, "The threat is here and now." Both men acknowledge that current plans for a national missile defense will require modification of the ABM Treaty (1972).

This poses another problem for the administration. There are still influential persons in it who are more worried about preserving the treaty (or offending Russia) than about preserving our security and our freedom to act in the world.

It is hardly necessary to pursue today the hoary debate about whether the ABM treaty had any value for American security in the two-superpower days of the Cold War. I note only that the Soviet Union's major violations of the treaty at Krasnoyarsk were confessed by Edouard Shevardnadze (the former Soviet foreign minister) soon after the Cold War ended; and I emphasize that whatever merit the treaty had then vanished with the Cold War—and in the face of nuclear proliferation and the ample demonstration of the possibilities for violating the treaty.

Today, it makes no sense at all to grant Russia a veto over our capacity to defend ourselves. We should give notice and withdraw from the treaty. Without a national and theater missile defense, we are without protection from weapons of mass destruction targeting our cities and blackmailing our policymakers and allies. No president has the right to ignore the common defense.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick is a professor at Georgetown University and a senior fellow of the American Enterprise Institute. She served as ambassador to the United Nations in the Reagan administration.

BLESSED LOCATION

Here is a basic truth: Good guys don't always finish first. In this century, peaceful, democratic states have been the victims of aggressive dictatorships; most of the European continent succumbed half a century ago to the armies and ambitions of Hitler and Stalin. The superiority of our democratic allies' morality and political system could not save them from conquest. Neither can our own superior morality and political system protect us from despots armed with the latest technology. Modern missilery has already significantly neutralized the advantages of what George Washington termed "our blessed location," which through history has protected us behind two oceans—even as we participated in foreign wars that devastated the major cities of Europe and East Asia.

As in the past, we Americans can defend our freedom and our lives only if we are strong enough to deter or defeat an attack. Our defense must keep pace with developments in weapons, technology, and tactics. Devastation, defeat, and occupation were the price paid by France when it counted on blocking the Nazi onslaught with the Maginot Line and a strategy that had been effective in the previous war. The Maginot Line was of course useless against Hitler's *Blitzkrieg*. He merely went around it.

Democratic governments have a special need for defense because modern democracies do not fight aggressive wars. Aggressive dictatorships, however, are frequently ready to undertake expansionist adventures for no cause but their own appetites. No objective reason was required to motivate Iraq to attack Kuwait. Or North Korea to advance against the South. Regimes that habitually use coercion against their own subjects find it natural to turn their aggression on others.

This tendency of expansionist dictatorships to start wars is the most powerful reason that the United States and other democratic governments need urgently to be able to defend themselves against today's dictatorships, armed as they are with nearly complete weapons of mass destruction.

Our nation's moral strength and intellectual clarity may be the foundation of our national security; but they are no substitute for an adequate defense. Rather, our moral strength should enable us to face squarely the dangers of proliferation. And that realism should lead us at last to build and deploy the defensive system begun—a full decade and a half ago—by Ronald Reagan. **NR**

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Arms Control Freaks

The administration likes negotiations better than it does defense.

BILL GERTZ

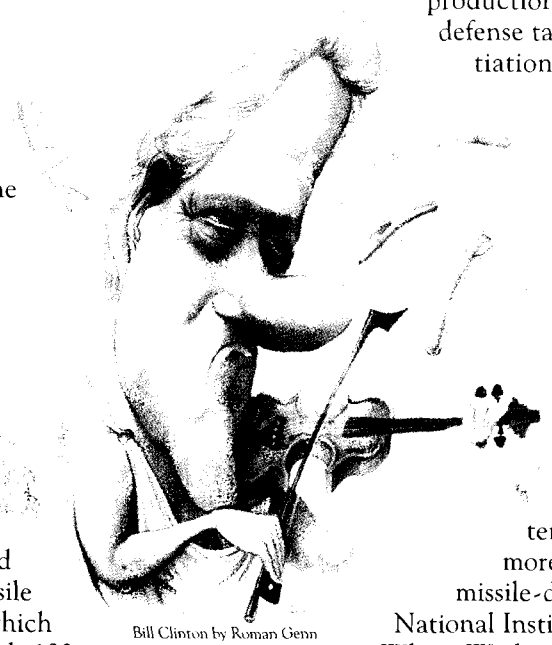
SINCE taking office in 1993, the Clinton administration has undertaken a systematic program that must be described as anti-anti-missile defense. Despite promising to build defenses against short-range missile attacks as soon as possible, President Clinton and his senior national-security officials have adopted a policy of delay and obfuscation intended to maintain the defenseless status quo. And it is not clear even now—in the wake of the administration's calls to renegotiate the ABM Treaty—that it is truly willing to abandon its arms-control orthodoxy.

The architect of Clinton's anti-anti-missile defense policy is Robert Bell, a former staff member of the Senate Armed Services Committee under Sam Nunn. During the fight over President Reagan's SDI proposal in the 1980s, Bell championed the "narrow," most restrictive interpretation of the ABM Treaty. Bell joined the White House National Security Council staff in 1993 and at once carried out a major "review" of missile defense with the underlying goal of preserving the ABM Treaty. This review led to a secret directive signed by Clinton in 1993 that affirmed the treaty as the basis for U.S. missile defenses (such as they were) and strategic relations with Russia.

The directive said that the United States would not deploy national missile defenses outside the ABM Treaty—which limits those defenses to a single site with 100 interceptors, a stricture that makes it virtually impossible to defend the entire United States against even a small attack. Clinton also agreed to add to the treaty four former Soviet republics that possessed nuclear weapons: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. This demarcation agreement, if Congress approves it in a treaty modification this year, will make it extremely difficult to amend the ABM Treaty. Any further treaty modifications, like the ones recently floated by the administration, will require protracted negotiations, with the United States getting one vote and Moscow in effect four.

The president also called for clarifying which short-range missile-defense systems are permitted under the treaty. Yet the clarification diplomacy that resulted only played into the hands of the Russians. In a series of lengthy negotiations, Moscow attempted to delay and limit U.S. missile defenses currently under development, making escalating demands. Bob Bell called it a "grand bargain" with the Russians; many in the Pentagon dubbed it a "grand sellout" of American national security.

The CIA quickly figured out the method in the Russians' delaying tactics. In May 1996 a National Reconnaissance Office satellite snapped photographs from space of a Russian manufacturing plant at Verkhnaya Salda, about 650 miles southeast of Moscow. The photos showed that Russia had restarted large-scale production of SA-12 air-defense systems, and included images of at least 38 SA-12 missile systems being produced at the factory. The SA-12 can shoot down short-range missiles. The CIA reported that Russia had concluded several contracts in early 1996 to sell advanced defense systems, which would result in the first exports of a variety of surface-to-air missile systems outside Eastern Europe.



Bill Clinton by Roman Genn

Pentagon officials saw the linkage between the production and the frustrating missile-defense talks in Geneva, i.e., that the negotiations were a way to prevent any market competition from the United States. Since Russia had all the air-defense systems it needed, the CIA concluded that "any surge in production is probably intended for export." Among the buyers were India, Finland, China, the United Arab Emirates, and Cyprus. "The Russians themselves have said that one of the reasons for trying to limit theater missile-defense systems is so their own systems will be more marketable," says Keith Payne, a missile-defense expert and president of the National Institute for Public Policy.

When Washington and Moscow reached final agreement on the clarification of the ABM Treaty's rules on short-range-missile defenses in September 1997, they signed two "agreed statements." The first applies to defenses with interceptors having velocities of less than 3 kilometers per second. It declares that these systems are "legal" as long as they are not tested against longer-range strategic-missile targets. The second covers defenses with interceptors that travel faster than 3 kilometers per second, and leaves determination of treaty compliance to each nation. Thus,

Mr. Gertz is the defense and national-security reporter for the *Washington Times* and is writing a book on President Clinton's national-security policies.

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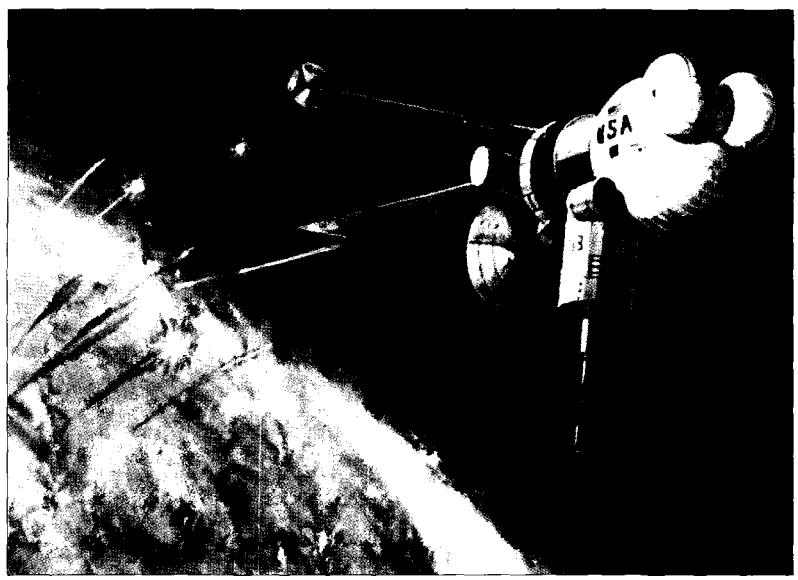
years of talks failed to resolve the most important issue—whether theater missile defenses with marginal capabilities against long-range missiles are legal.

President Clinton's handling of national missile defense—systems explicitly designed to knock out incoming long-range missiles—is just as discouraging. On several occasions in the 1990s he vetoed or used his Democratic allies in Congress to filibuster and defeat legislation calling for deployment of a limited missile defense against long-range attack. The White House insisted that a multi-billion "research" program without a definite deployment plan was the only policy it would follow. Yet in 1997 Pentagon documents revealed that the so-called National Missile Defense program was underfunded by an astonishing 100 percent—a discovery that was made by the same Pentagon officials who had been running the program for two years.



A single testing failure of a target missile in 1997 set back the program for an entire year. The reason: The Pentagon did not think to produce a back-up test missile in case the test failed. Civilian defense officials could provide no explanation when Congress demanded one. But the reason seemed clear enough: Without the support of the most senior administration officials, the program had languished.

When congressional Republicans decided to make national missile defense a campaign issue in 1996, Clinton and his aides managed to neutralize them by announcing a counter-plan, a move that effectively eliminated the issue from serious debate. The plan called for a three-year research program beginning in 1996 to study whether there was a need for a limited defense against long-range missiles. After three years, a decision was to be made on whether actually to build one in another three years. The plan unveiled by defense secretary William Perry became known as "three-plus-three." But to critics it was viewed as a political ploy and quickly dubbed "three-plus-infinity."

By 1998 the National Missile Defense program was underfunded, and deployment decisions that needed to be made in 1999 were in jeopardy because of the tight schedule. The Pentagon selected the aerospace giant Boeing as its "lead systems integrator," but the company and the Pentagon both thought that the defense plans were "extremely high risk." In other words, the program was unlikely ever to produce any limited missile defense in the time allotted for it.

The president's latest move on deployment came in mid-January. Defense secretary William S. Cohen announced, finally, that the missile threat to the United States was not ten years away, as the CIA had claimed in a controversial 1995 intelligence estimate, but was here and now. Still, Cohen said the $6.6 billion over six years the Pentagon is budgeting for missile defenses does not mean a system will actually be deployed. The deployment decision is to be made in June 2000—a kind of summer surprise, no doubt, for Vice President Al Gore, who presumably will be entering the final months of his presidential campaign.

Cohen also announced that the administration's 1996 plan to develop a system in three years and then decide whether to deploy it in three years more was "a rush to failure," something no one bothered to mention when the plan was announced. Cohen said the three-plus-three plan would now become three-plus-five, with the earliest possible deployment slipping from 2003 to 2005. So the administration (or at least part of it) now acknowledges that the threat is real—but the president's response is further to delay deployment.

Clinton had planned to announce the missile-defense money as part of his State of the Union address, but backed off after Russia's parliament again withdrew consideration of ratification of the START II treaty, following Clinton's December attacks on Iraq. The administration now says it will begin discussions with the Russians on modifying the ABM Treaty to allow for modest defense against long-range missiles, talks that will likely prove as fruitless as the negotiations on theater missile defenses.

When asked what will happen if the treaty cannot be renegotiated, Cohen said, "Then we have the option of . . . indicating we would simply pull out of the treaty." For arms controllers like Bell, who have an almost theological devotion to the ABM Treaty, the defense secretary had committed a heresy, prompting Bell to hold a press conference the next day to repeat what national security advisor Samuel R. Berger had said only a week before Cohen's announcement: "We remain strongly committed to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty."

The administration continues to argue that without the treaty there is the risk of a new arms race with Russia. I asked assistant defense secretary Ted Warner if he honestly believed Russia can afford an arms race, given that its economy is on the verge of collapse. He said, "Well, no, not right now," but perhaps in the future. Russia knows it is dealing with a president and an administration that care more about Cold War-style arms talks than about building defenses. So Moscow will continue to bully the administration by threatening to refuse to cut its missile force or to ratify START II. And why not? It has worked before. **NR**

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The War of the Lights

As offensive weapons evolve, so must defenses.

MARK HELPRIN

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, on a cold clear day, I broke my patrol in a quiet orchard on the Israeli–Lebanese border. Looking up into a perfectly blue sky, I saw far above me the tiniest specks, so small that they would disappear and then sparkle vaguely in reappearance. In this barely perceptible, inaudible glitter that seemed not much more than a trick of the eye, men were at that moment fighting for their lives. And years before, at the edge of the Sinai Desert on a moonless January night, I had watched the small lights marking Israeli A-4s rise and fall in silent parabolas like the abstract play of lights in an exhibition at a planetarium.

No one is truly accustomed to the kind of angelic combat, as if from the pages of Milton, that I witnessed on these two occasions, for after thousands of years war is still in the main either Homeric or industrial. But for more than a century it has been moving away from the human scale and into realms of speed, force, and discreet communication associated previously only with the supernatural. The nature of this progression is not always clear, and recognition is not automatic. What I saw as an infantryman suddenly illuminated something I had seen as a boy.

In the summer of 1960, I lived with my family on a mountaintop in the West Indies. Alerted by the BBC, we went out to the terrace one night to look for a round and even light that did not sparkle, the brightest thing in the sky after the sun and moon. This was Echo I, a huge communications satellite that moved in stunning silence across the previously inviolable field of stars. What we did not realize that August was that Echo I was a harbinger of the age of the ballistic missile. The routine launch of satellites meant that orbital trajectories for nuclear weapons would be routine as well. Range, power, and speed had leapt beyond the custom of the imagination. Whether this was paradise lost or paradise regained I do not know, but it was a great acceleration of what I think of as the war of the lights, a war in which victory belongs to those with the best understanding of hitherto abstract qualities.

Mr. Helprin, author of *Winter's Tale* and *A Soldier of the Great War*, was educated at Harvard and Oxford, and served in the Israeli infantry and Air Force. A contributing editor of the *Wall Street Journal* and a Senior Fellow of the Hudson Institute, he was an Advisor on Defense and Foreign Relations to presidential candidate Bob Dole.

REDUCING CASUALTIES

Warfare has evolved in a series of moves and countermoves that do not, contrary to popular belief, necessarily lead to more and more horrific weapons and greater and greater casualties. Sometimes the evolution makes for less terrible means of fighting and fewer casualties, when, for example, a destructive stalemate is transformed into a more quickly resolved action of maneuver, as in the case of tanks cutting short First World War battles that otherwise would have lasted longer and taken more men.

Generally speaking, hardening, protection, and weapons that can convert static war into war of maneuver make for a reduction in casualties until the next development. Throughout history statesmen and military leaders have understood that their inescapable obligation is to participate in the never-ending moves and countermoves of this cycle. Though they have done so at times for reasons of conquest, they have done so mainly to preserve the life of a nation and the principles it espouses.

Now we find ourselves in the unusual position of debating whether to make the countermove that would protect us, and eventually others, from the appalling power of nuclear bombs delivered by ballistic missiles. The proposition of mounting a strategic defense seems on its face and at first blush to make sense. When confronted with the threat of immense destruction, one takes action to avert it from kith and kin. It is what one naturally does and what we have always done. It has seen us through and brought us to this point.

But our intellectual elites say this is unsatisfactory. Only in abandoning move and countermove can we do what we intend. In refusing to shatter our ancient custom, we proceed blindly to Armageddon. But the pattern of military competition cannot be broken by will. Will is not transnational. The will of one nation cannot direct the actions of another save by some form of conquest. If two parties are of the same mind they do not have between them a pattern that needs emendation, and if two rival states agree to regulate their antagonism the decision follows rather than precedes the warming of relations and is the recognition rather than the creation of the reality of their affairs. In the absence of an overpowering international regime (the prospect of which delights liberals even as they condemn imperialism), nations will break their agreements as demanded by their interests. This was the fate of the Washington Agreements, particularly the Naval Limitations Treaty, and of the Pact of Locarno, during the aptly named interwar period.

Most arms competitions are not simply rivalries between two parties unaffected by other influences. When the Chinese developed a nuclear capability the Soviets were forced both to increase their own and to strengthen conventional forces in the absence of a nuclear monopoly. This swelled Soviet inventories to an extent that the West could not ignore given the possibility of a Sino–Soviet rapprochement. And the West's due diligence in response swayed the Soviets in turn, which no doubt influenced the Chinese, and

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so on and so forth. Yet even this tripartite dynamic, though somewhat complicated, is flat in comparison to the multidimensional world of complex security calculations.

Much elegant argumentation against strategic defense is based solely upon the balance between the superpowers, with no mention of, for example, North Korean or Iranian missiles. This is partly because it has been theologically correct to deny the obvious imminent arrival of such things, and partly because a case against strategic defense, made without consideration of the lesser but budding powers, nuclear and otherwise, tends to collapse. Is the United States supposed to suffer an attack by a sea-launched terrorist missile or a North Korean ICBM because of arguments about the Soviet–American strategic standoff in the Eighties that were invalid then and are hardly applicable now? Even were they valid then and applicable now, are we supposed to hallucinate away the rapidly developing strategic danger from other quarters?

Now more than ever, military preparations are necessitated not just by military developments but by advances in all areas. Science proceeds apace, creating things for insatiable civilian demand that then become devilishly applicable to military questions. In your 1999 General Motors Nadler you can look at a little screen and see precisely where you are in town. You, as red dot, are at the corner, a few feet in front of the stop sign. Make a right, and there is the entrance to Toys "Я" Us. And if *you* have access to such a precise system of location, so do others.

The Soviet Union eventually could have used—and Russia and others may yet use—global-positioning satellites for the terminal guidance of otherwise relatively less precise re-entry vehicles thrown off a bull's-eye by weather, wind, and the inexactitude of hurling a warhead on a ballistic track across half the globe. The greatest danger of terminal guidance is not just the attainment of perfect accuracy, which allows far smaller warheads to destroy targets, perhaps doubling or tripling the effect of an existing arsenal and firing all kinds of ambitions. More dangerous even than this would be the real-time end-of-trajectory direction of these warheads onto movable or even moving targets—the heart of American and Russian defenses and the world's nuclear stability—the assumedly invulnerable rail- or truck-mounted missiles, or ballistic-missile submarines leaving a faint but detectable perturbation of the waters above them. The impetus for such a destabilizing advance comes not from military initiative but from irrepressible developments in the civilian world from which the military cannot insulate itself except by adopting the hopeful delusions of its habitual critics.

WHAT WORKS

The causes of war, evolution of weaponry, dynamics of arms competitions, and need for vigilance notwithstanding, a strategic defense cannot be desirable unless it can work, and most people who have been within 20 miles of a college believe that it can't. Though it is a mystery that the experts who oppose it on the ground that it is impossible also believe it can be destabilizing, in the academy wonders never cease. The voice of a certain orthodoxy says that strategic defense

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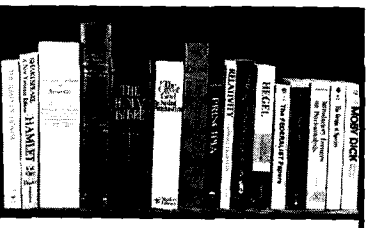

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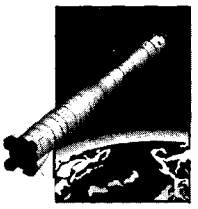
won't work, and with each advance that same voice retrenches to condemn what has yet to be perfected.

Richard Garwin once told me, approximately, "I say it won't work, and I built the hydrogen bomb. What have you ever built?" Although I hadn't and still haven't built a hydrogen bomb (I have problems of self-esteem), I know that the challenge of realizing a strategic defense is neither fundamental, like the building of Mr. Garwin's hydrogen bomb, nor that dissimilar to others that have preceded it, such as the very missilery it is intended to thwart. Anti-missile intercepts



Are we supposed to hallucinate away the rapidly developing strategic danger from other quarters?

of incoming warheads are no longer rare. The first came in the Eighties, and then, in January of 1991, when computer speed was glacial, a Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile lifted off from California and at the end of its flight over the South Pacific released decoys and a warhead. An interceptor of the Exoatmospheric Re-Entry Vehicle Interceptor System rose to meet the incoming projectiles, distinguished between the warhead and the decoys, and destroyed the warhead.

When the debate actually had some fire, because the Clinton administration had not yet begun to strangle the SDI in its cradle, a major contention of the critics was that no combination of computer hardware and software was capable of detecting, tracking, and identifying incoming missiles, distinguishing the wheat (warheads) from the chaff (decoys), and then directing a counterattack with the flawless precision required. This task of battle management may indeed have overwhelmed the computers of 1984 or perhaps 1988, but those of 2000 or 2004? The 1989 Intel 486 chip operated at a speed of 25 MHz, with 1.2 million transistors. A new IBM/Motorola chip due this year is slated to operate at 1,000 MHz, and the Sun UltraSPARC of 2000 will consist of more than 400 million transistors. But clock speed and number of elements are only part of the story. The architecture of the components—RISC and parallel processing, for example—multiplies by many times the effects of merely bulking them up. Moore's Law, that chip performance doubles every two years, was proposed in 1965. Anyone familiar with the course of computer technology in the mid Eighties could have seen where it was headed, and that if it really were true that computational capacities in strategic defense were deficient, this would pass, as it has, and pass further, as it will to an extent that one should be able to foresee even without the salutary experience of having built the hydrogen bomb.

Every technical difficulty can be overcome, and many of the impossibilities cited early on have yielded to imagination and application. The academic critics did not entertain practical solutions to their willing despair not because they were unable to but because they did not want to. It is a religious debate. It is eschatology, after all. But though in religious priesthoods half the game is to discipline the sin of pride, in the secular priesthoods the trick is to let that particular fish run as far as it can with the line, and it does. As Samuel Johnson said, those who grow great and happy by electrifying a bottle think that problems of war and peace are trifling. This is surely the case of a certain coterie that speaks with presumed authority of first things, that strives for a unification theory (separate, one supposes, from the Unification Church), that identifies the moment the universe began, and that actually believes it is hot on the trail of knowing everything. Why is it, then, that though these people can push God off His throne they cannot envision a mechanical system for shooting down ballistic missiles? Suddenly, they are saying, though they are still the lords of the universe, they cannot electrify a bottle.

PERFECT PROTECTION?

Even if various immoral and impolitic lunatics and geeks at Livermore and Sandia can eventually bring the idea to life and make it work, can they make it work perfectly? Though it may be 98 percent effective, of 4,000 incoming warheads 80 will get through, and if 70 of these found their targets and 60 functioned as intended, what would be left of a country that is threatened with dissolution by a UPS strike? This line of reasoning, a genuine enthusiasm for some, fails to acknowledge that an attack on American cities, industry, and infrastructure would be foolish absent an attempt to negate American retaliatory capacity, which would for its negation require many more than 60—or 600—warheads.

In a massive attack of thousands of warheads some would get through no matter what the system deployed to stop them, making a first strike even by a United States possessed with a missile shield out of the question, because the price inflicted by the indeterminate number of retaliatory nuclear charges that penetrated the shield would be unknowable, unprecedented, and unacceptable. At the same time, the existence of a strategic defense would protect not only the mass of the population but, most significantly, our retaliatory capacity, making a first strike against us useless and unavailing. In the environment that existed when the SDI was proposed, the looming danger was ineluctable destabilization as a result of unstoppable advances in precision guidance. Contrary to baseless assertions that it could shield an American first strike and would not deter a Soviet first strike, a strategic defense would have been not the end of a stable balance but its reprieve.

And yet the Left ignored this with the same questionable agility it showed in abandoning its embrace of the Strategic Bombing Survey—the document produced at the end of the Second World War to assess the effect of aerial attacks on Germany and Japan. The conclusions were deeply influenced by a staff that included many New Dealers of the Henry Wallace era; Paul Baran, who was a former Russo-German Communist and would become America's leading Marxist economist; Jurgen Kuczynski, who was an active member of the German Communist Party and Soviet agent while engaged in the project; and John Kenneth Galbraith, who was John Kenneth Galbraith.

Though they knew German war production in the year

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they chose as a baseline was famously inadequate, they took the fact that during and after heavy bombing it increased to mean that the effect of the bombing was virtually nil. Perfectly willing to speculate that production would not have increased had the bombing not occurred, they were unwilling to speculate to what extent it might have been suppressed. This at a time when the United States and Great Britain had the world's greatest strategic air forces and a monopoly of atomic weapons, and when Stalin knew that whereas the democracies had for economic reasons to demobilize their vast ground forces, no such constraints governed their strategic air arms. Coincidence or not, the mantra that strategic bombing was nothing more than a tickle with an ostrich feather (happily, ignored by everyone else), was faithfully taken up by the Left.

But as soon as the correlation of strategic forces between the United States and the Soviet Union began to shift, they sang not their song about ostrich feathers. By the time of Reagan's push for strategic defense, the tickle had become a blow of such devastating force, no matter in what degree it was delivered, that resistance to it was deemed one of the dismal stupidities of the Right. Thus the favorite mockery of instructions to schoolchildren to duck under their desks during a nuclear holocaust. No matter that beyond the zone of detonation most deaths would be attributable to building collapse in the shock wave, and that the best way to survive a building collapse is in the shelter of a substructure such as a desk. The hallmark of survival in the nuclear age is an intuitive understanding of the counterintuitive. And perhaps even more important, it is preferable in determining nuclear strategy not to be influenced by fashions in opinion that habitually run parallel to the expressed interests of a foreign power.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Even if a strategic defense works, if it doesn't increase the likelihood of a first strike, and if survival is preferable to death, it is uneconomical. This is an argument that is actually presented—that it costs too much. Excuse me? We spend three times what we spend on strategic defense on cookies and crackers, six times as much on sausages and prepared meats, and ten times as much on lottery tickets. By any humanitarian measure cost is immaterial. Simply reflect the Left's belief about nuclear holocaust back into the argument, and objections about cost occasion not merely answers that are devastating to its argument but questions that shed light upon its sincerity. Why does it foster the misconception that "Star Wars" (does the Right refer to income redistribution as "Welfare Cadillac"?) involves space-based attacks on populations and cities? Why does it appeal to keep "the heavens"

Small Company's New Golf Ball Flies Too Far; Could Obsolete Many Golf Courses.

Pro Hits 400-Yard Tee Shots During Test Round

Want To Shoot An Eagle or Two ?

By Charlie Allen

YALESVILLE, CT – A small golf company in Connecticut has created a powerful, new ball that flies like a U-2, putts with the steady roll of a cue ball and bites the green on approach shots like a dropped cat. But don't look for it on weekend TV. Long-hitting pros could make a joke out of some of golf's finest courses with it. One pro who tested the ball drove it 400 yards, reaching the green on all but the longest par-four's. Scientific tests by an independent lab using a hitting machine prove the ball outdistances 15 major brands by up to 21 yards.

The ball's extraordinary distance comes partly from a revolutionary new dimple design that keeps the ball aloft longer. But there's also a secret change in the core that makes it rise faster off the clubhead. Another change reduces air drag. The result is a ball that gains altitude quickly, then sails like a glider. None of the changes is noticeable in the ball itself.

Despite this extraordinary performance, the company has a problem. A spokesman put it this way: "In golf you need endorsements and TV publicity. This is what gets you in the pro shops and stores where 95% of all golf products are sold. Unless the pros use your ball on TV, you're virtually locked out of these outlets. TV advertising is too expensive to buy on your own, at least for us.

"Now, you've seen how far this ball can fly. Can you imagine a pro using it on TV and eagle-ing par-four's? He would turn the course into a par-three, and real men don't play par-three's. This new fly-power forces us to sell it without relying on pros or pro-shops. One way is to sell it direct from our plant. That way we can keep the name printed on the ball a secret that only a buyer would know. There's more to golf than tournaments, you know."

The company guarantees a golfer a prompt refund if the new ball doesn't cut five to ten strokes off his or her average score. Simply return the balls–new or used–to the address below. "No one else would dare do that," boasted the company's director.

If you would like an eagle or two, here's your best chance yet. Write your name and address and "Code Name S" (the ball's R&D name) on a piece of paper and send it along with a check (or your credit card number and expiration date) to National Golf Center **(Dept. S-514)**, 60 Church Street, Yalesville, CT 06492. Or phone 800-285-3900 anytime. No P.O. boxes. One dozen "S" balls cost $24.95, two to five dozen are only $22.00 each, six dozen are only $109.00. You save $40.70 ordering six. Shipping and handling is only $5.00 no matter how large your order. Specify white or Hi-Vision yellow.

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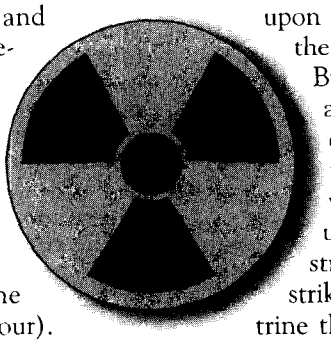
free from weapons of war, as if space were not militarized to the hilt with observation and communication satellites and the (now) resistanceless corridors through which every death-dealing, city-smashing, baby-killing nuclear warhead would travel on its way to detonation?

MORE MADNESS?

The crown jewel of arguments against strategic defense is that it will undermine and then destroy reliance upon the doctrine of mutually assured destruction, which in these parlous years has prevented a nuclear exchange, based as it is upon the sound concept of deterrence. It isn't just that strategic defense might encourage a first strike, opponents argue, but that in doing away with MAD it opens up the prospect of war-fighting and God knows what other changes in the doctrines of the most dangerous standoff in the world. That is why the ABM Treaty is sacrosanct, and why the current administration willfully handicaps even the elements of strategic defense that it is forced to allow, crippling in range, speed, and communications the weapons it then ridicules for their inadequacy.

The new noble desire to freeze strategic doctrine comes too late, for mutual destruction is no longer assured, and with each passing day becomes less so. Simply put, the invulnerable deterrent is no longer invulnerable. This is owing to precision guidance and then to the arms reductions that were to have increased stability. If, as in the American case, 423 bombers are reduced to 174, 1,000 land-based missiles become 640 (with not one being mobile), and 36 ballistic missile submarines turn into 18, the effectiveness of the force arrayed against them is multiplied in inverse relation to the reductions. As a finishing touch to the strange expression of decreased probability of error times fewer targets, the targets themselves have been put on lower alert. ICBMs in fixed silos would have to launch on warning to survive a first strike, and especially in the current climate this is less likely than not. Fewer bombers in fewer bases on lower alert, the absence of an American air defense, and the presence of a well developed Russian air defense make the bomber leg of the triad anything but invulnerable. And sub-surface missiles, the keystone of our deterrent, have been concentrated in just 18 enormous Trident submarines (which the Clinton administration proposes to reduce by four). Let us say 12 are at sea. For each of these, six Russian submarines exist that, in conjunction with Russian surface combatants, could hunt them in seas that are becoming less and less opaque.



All this is not to say that a Russian first strike is probable or possible now, even with an allowance for military government in Russia and a few hundred MIRV'd missiles salted away in caves. But it is to say that after a few years' restoration of former Soviet forces a first strike, desperate though it might be, would have far better chances of success than one ten years ago, and that ten years from now the chances may be better still. It is to say that advances in technology, coupled with arms reductions, mean that, should we choose to, we cannot rely upon MAD in the near future because it simply will not be there.

NOW MORE THAN EVER

Though plainly justifiable before, because of the natural evolution of things a strategic defense is more justifiable now, even vis-à-vis Russia. And since the terms of the strategic-defense debate were set forth in the Eighties an entirely new stimulus has appeared: the acquisition of ballistic missiles by a number of unfriendly and rogue powers, and their drive for nuclear weapons. It is only a matter of time until the warheads are mated to the missiles and the range of the missiles increased. Iran has been financing successful North Korean ballistic-missile development, and while North Korea has been building its bomb Iran has been fishing in Russian waters for bombs of its own. Theoretically, of course, terrorists can possess missiles and use them. China is seeking to triple its long-range nuclear capabilities with the tools of the trade allowed to it by the Clinton administration for no apparent reason other than campaign contributions from the Chinese themselves and from the American corporations and go-betweens that traffic in supercomputers and launch techniques.

To the question of how the United States would deal with a desperate, accidental, or renegade Russian missile launch, or with a future Iranian or North Korean attack arising from inexplicable though not unexpected madness, or with nuclear brinksmanship from a confident and aggressive new China with fleet ballistic missile submarines and MIRV'd ICBMs, the answer is that it would do nothing because it could do nothing.

What is our policy? That is our policy, to do nothing, to be capable of doing nothing, to abdicate, to prevaricate, and to fear. All because of a doctrinal cowardice and irresponsibility that draw their strength mainly from the power of coercion within intellectual elites. What these elites propose may upon superficial examination look good and make them comfortable, as specious arguments often do. But their case is unprecedented in that it makes a virtue of failure to defend our lives, land, and civilization, as if to defend what we hold dear were actually a covert and immoral aggression, which it is not. Their position rests primarily upon the arguments, rebutted above, that strategic defense is a plausible shield for a first strike, and that its appearance will endanger a doctrine that, although they do not know it, is already dead. Consider both the magnitude of what they put at risk and how they scoff at common sense.

If they in whose hands these questions rest betray the future it would not be the first time such a thing has happened. It all came before, in England, in the air-defense debates of the 1930s, when a prostrate power was underestimated and misjudged, too much attention was paid to cost, and the basic principles of strategy and defense were upended. By no coincidence the war that followed was so closely run at first as to be still the greatest lesson in such things that history has yet to offer. It, too, was a war of the lights, underestimated before its time, hardly understood as it raged—and perhaps the precursor of things to come for us. **NR**

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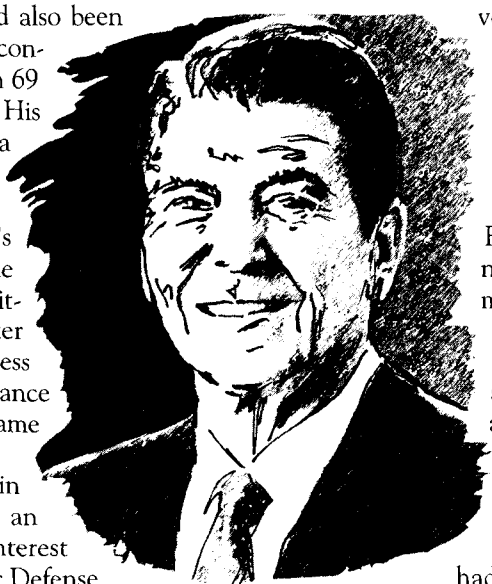
Reagan's Big Idea

How the Gipper conceived Star Wars.

LOU CANNON

On the eve of Ronald Reagan's election as fortieth president of the United States, a reporter asked him what Americans saw in him. Reagan hesitated, then replied, "Would you laugh if I told you that I think, maybe, they see themselves and that I'm one of them? I've never been able to detach myself or think that I, somehow, am apart from them."

No one laughed. Reagan was popular with the working press, and reporters found it neither immodest of him nor newsworthy that he saw himself as national Everyman. While many in the campaign press corps had from time to time been appalled by Reagan's knowledge gaps, they had also been impressed by his consistent ability to connect with the people. Reagan was then 69 years old and secure in this connection. His bond with his fellow Americans was a gift that had been nourished in Illinois and Iowa and polished in Hollywood and on the campaign trail. "Reagan's solutions to problems were always the same as the guy in the bar," said his political strategist, Stu Spencer. Walter Lippmann once wrote that the greatness of de Gaulle was not that he was in France but that France was in him. In the same sense, America was in Ronald Reagan.



Ronald Reagan by Bob Bukin

A recognition that Reagan, while in many ways exceptional, was in truth an ordinary American helps explain his interest in the vision that became the Strategic Defense Initiative or Star Wars. (The "Star Wars" label, while intended derisively, did not harm the missile-defense cause. In the movie trilogy, as Richard Perle observed, "the good guys won.") Reagan shared not only the common sense of the "guy in the bar" but his innocence, and to some extent his ignorance of strategic issues in the nuclear age. Ordinary Americans rarely dwell on calamities too awful to contemplate such as the grim reality that the precarious peace called the Cold War was preserved by fear of mutual annihilation. After Reagan proposed SDI, polls showed that most Americans had assumed the United States possessed some defense against nuclear missiles, other than the threat of wiping out those who launched them. They were horrified, as Reagan had been, when they learned otherwise.

Running for governor of California in 1966, Reagan often said that "there are simple answers, just not easy ones." But there is no simple or single explanation for Reagan's fascination with SDI. His advocacy of missile defense was a distillation of many factors: religious beliefs that interpreted the Biblical story of Armageddon as a prophecy of nuclear war; a role in a movie as a government agent who thwarts the theft of a defensive death ray; a lifelong interest in science fiction; an enduring belief in American technological know-how; and an optimistic yearning for a benign alternative to the threat of nuclear war. It is difficult to identify the primary ingredient in this stew, but I suspect it was Reagan's revulsion at the idea of mutual assured destruction. Reagan is a moral man and MAD is immoral, however effective it was in deterring Soviet aggression in the decades after World War II. "It's like you and me sitting here in a discussion where we are each pointing a loaded gun at each other, and if you say anything wrong or I say anything wrong, we're going to pull the trigger," Reagan told me in a 1989 interview when I was working on my third book about him. "And I just thought this was ridiculous—mutual assured destruction. It really was a *mad* policy."

It is not clear when Reagan came to this view. The conventional opinion, compellingly put forth by Martin Anderson in his 1988 book, *Revolution*, is that Reagan's epiphany occurred during a July 31, 1979, visit to the headquarters of the North American Aerospace Defense Command at Cheyenne Mountain, Wyoming, when Air Force general James Hill explained that nothing could be done if the Soviets fired a missile at a U.S. city, aside from a few minutes' warning. According to Anderson, who accompanied him, Reagan was shocked. "We have spent all that money and have all that equipment and there is nothing we can do to prevent a nuclear missile from hitting us," he said on the flight back to Los Angeles.

Anderson is a reliable witness, but Reagan had also expressed concern about mutual assured destruction during his near-miss attempt to win the Republican presidential nomination in 1976. And he may have had even earlier qualms. In 1967, Gov. Reagan attended a briefing on defensive technologies at the invitation of physicist Edward Teller, who recalled in 1990 that Reagan had asked "good and fundamental questions" about nuclear policy. Reagan did not then go on record as favoring missile defense, but he was impressed by Teller, and it is quite possible that this briefing planted the seeds of an alternative doctrine to MAD.

Garry Wills and others have suggested that the seeds of SDI were planted in Reagan's head by a 1940 film, *Murder in the Air*, the last and best of four low-budget potboilers featuring Reagan as Secret Service agent Brass Bancroft. In the movie, Bancroft thwarts a spy who is trying to steal the "inertia projector," which

Mr. Cannon has covered Ronald Reagan since 1965. Three of his six books are on the former president. His current book, *Official Negligence*, concerns the 1991 Los Angeles riots.

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could shoot planes out of the sky from a distance before they could bomb the United States. As the film described it, this "new superweapon not only makes the United States invincible, but in so doing promises to become the greatest force for world peace ever discovered." Bancroft finds the stolen projector and uses it to down the plane in which the spy is trying to take the plans for the device to an unnamed enemy.

Reagan spent what he believed were the best years of his life in Hollywood and forever after drew on his experiences in the film community for ideas and inspiration. He became an anti-Communist because of clashes with the Communists in the film industry. When he returned to Washington from Geneva in 1985 after meeting with the new Soviet leader, Gorbachev, Reagan compared arms-control negotiations with the Soviets to labor negotiations with movie producers when he was president of the Screen Actors Guild. Long after he had left Hollywood for the political stage, Reagan recalled the plots of his films, including the Bancroft series, and used them for anecdotes or analogies.

Reagan was a dreamer with an interest in world peace that prompted him to join the United World Federalists in 1945.

Reagan also had an avid interest in science fiction that began in the 1940s and endured throughout his presidency. The genre was preoccupied, particularly after Hiroshima, with fantastic weapons and interplanetary interventions to save the world from nuclear destruction. Reagan was a dreamer with an interest in world peace that prompted him to join the United World Federalists in 1945. He was a fan of the classic 1951 film, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, in which an alien hero, played by Michael Rennie, comes to earth as an envoy from an advanced civilization that has curbed its warlike tendencies and uses an interplanetary police force of robots to destroy nations that resort to war. Rennie's civilization fears that earthlings will discover space travel and spread nuclear war into the galaxy. The alien's mission is to warn the nations of Earth to work together in peace or face destruction by the robotic police force—a decision left unresolved at film's end. Colin Powell believes that Reagan's proposal to share the fruits of SDI research with the Soviets derived from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. The national-security community was aghast at the idea.

Missile defense was not on the nation's radar screen during the Reagan administration's early years. Reagan was out of commission for months after he was shot and nearly killed by a would-be assassin on March 30, 1981, and he focused on economic issues rather than foreign affairs when he returned to action. Until Gorbachev came along, he showed no interest in engaging any of a series of ailing Soviet leaders. But Reagan did put the United States in a position to negotiate from strength by carrying out his campaign promise to increase military spending in what he said was a response to a continuing Soviet arms buildup. The U.S. increase in military spending was grist for the growing nuclear-freeze movement, which blamed Reagan for escalating U.S.–Soviet tensions. Few freeze advocates would have believed that Reagan saw the buildup as a means to the end of abolishing nuclear weapons.

The doctrine of deterrence had been in place for so long when Reagan took office that it seemed permanent. With few exceptions, the Left and Right shared the premises of deterrence, while disagreeing on the nature of the principal threat to peace. Arms-control professionals sought parity between the U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals but always at higher levels than before. The Soviets were then building powerful intercontinental ballistic missiles with multiple warheads at a pace that outstripped U.S. capabilities. The land-based component of the U.S. response to the buildup was the MX missile that President Carter had courageously endorsed over opposition within his own party. But Carter and defense secretary Harold Brown could not win congressional approval of an MX basing system, and Reagan and his own defense secretary, Caspar Weinberger, ran into the same problem. Renaming the MX the "Peacekeeper," as Reagan did, was no help. On December 7, 1982, the House stripped MX funds from the budget, setting in motion a chain of events that led to SDI.

In the early years of the Reagan administration, the concept of missile defense had been kept alive within the White House by an informal group of conservatives that included Anderson, Ed Meese, Richard Allen, and science advisor George Keyworth, with military advice from Karl Bendetsen and Air Force general Daniel Graham. The group was joined by William Clark after he replaced Allen as national security advisor. Congressional rejection of the MX spurred Clark's deputy and eventual successor, Robert (Bud) McFarlane, to sound out key senators on ways of finding an acceptable basing system. The consultation led to a commission of outside experts, headed by Brent Scowcroft, which explored MX basing while McFarlane and the Joint Chiefs of Staff took a fresh look at missile defense.

McFarlane, at once beleaguered and dedicated, was skeptical about the feasibility of a defensive system. But he was frustrated by the MX fiasco, believing that Reagan had raised public awareness about the proliferation of Soviet ICBMs without having anything to show for it. McFarlane reasoned that a missile-defense plan would force the Soviets to compete in multiple technologies where the United States would have the edge. This in turn might prod the Soviets into negotiations where U.S. missile defense could be bargained away for reduction in Soviet ICBMs. Because McFarlane believed the United States would be trading nothing for something, he called the idea "The Sting." McFarlane knew that Reagan did not see missile defense as a bargaining chip, but he believed the president would agree that deployment was unnecessary if the Soviets accepted massive reductions in their nuclear arsenals.

McFarlane found an ally in Admiral James Watkins, the chief of naval operations. Watkins was a nuclear engineer and a devout Catholic who had been outraged by a pastoral letter of U.S. Catholic bishops that condemned the nuclear-arms race without mentioning the Soviet buildup. But as Watkins explored the issue, he began to question the morality and the wisdom of mutual assured destruction. By the

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time of the MX vote, he had decided that MAD was "morally distasteful" as well as "a political loser" and confided his views to McFarlane. Unknown to Watkins, Army general John Vessey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, had similar thoughts. When Watkins, in a partly scripted dialogue with McFarlane, advocated a new look at missile defense during Reagan's quarterly meeting with the chiefs in February 1983, he was backed by Vessey and the other chiefs. Reagan was delighted. Years later he remembered this meeting as seminal and told me that the chiefs had said the "technology of today" made possible a defensive nuclear shield. This was a stretch. The chiefs had taken note of promising defensive technologies they said ought to be explored. "We never believed in the umbrella," Watkins said in 1990. But Reagan thought that anything that could be imagined could be created. Buoyed by the meeting, he took the leap of faith into Star Wars.

On March 23, 1983, Reagan gave a nationally televised speech on "peace and national security," most of it a standard review of the Soviet military buildup and of Soviet and Cuban intelligence efforts in Central America. Near the end of the speech, he proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative—a bold pitch that had never even been discussed by the National Security Council. In a memorable passage, Reagan called on "the scientific community in our country, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn their great talents to the cause of mankind and world peace, to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete."

The rest, as they say, is history. Although Star Wars never went beyond a rudimentary testing stage, it changed the strategic-arms debate in ways favorable to the United States. This was not apparent in 1983 when Soviet leader Yuri Andropov was comparing Reagan to Hitler. U.S.–Soviet relations reached a low point on September 1 after a Soviet fighter shot down a Korean Air Lines jumbo jet, killing all 269 aboard, including 61 Americans.

Star Wars, meanwhile, caused consternation in Congress and the national-security community. Many congressional Democrats argued that a defensive shield was not possible while also contending that it was so destabilizing that it might prompt the Soviets to launch a first strike. These criticisms seemed contradictory on their face. Why would the Soviets be terrified by a weapon system that could not possibly work? ("Which is it, Al?" my journalist son Carl Cannon asked Al Gore, then a House member. Gore chuckled and did not answer the question.) The "wise men" of traditional deterrence scorned SDI. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in 1984, McGeorge Bundy, George Kennan, Robert McNamara, and Gerard Smith argued that Reagan could have either new arms-control agreements or missile defense—but not both. These architects of deterrence thought Reagan unrealistic. "He was a romantic, a radical, a nuclear abolitionist," as Strobe Talbott put it. Talbott, then Washington bureau chief of *Time* and the author of influential books on arms control, led the way in drawing attention to Reagan's skimpy command of basic facts about nuclear weapons. Reagan, for instance, acknowledged that he did not understand "throw-weight" (the lifting power of a missile) and believed that cruise missiles could be used only defensively. Reagan also did not know (or had forgotten) that most Soviet missiles were land-based, which was the biggest difference between the U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals.

Reagan was not embarrassed by his deficiencies, and he dismissed out of hand the Soviet contention that SDI was really an offensive system in disguise. He had changed little over the years. Reagan's only conceit was his belief that he could negotiate effectively with anyone, as he demonstrated with Gorbachev at the Geneva summit in November 1985. Reagan was still enamored of science fiction. At one point, he departed from his briefing papers and told Gorbachev that the United States and the Soviet Union would cooperate if faced with an invasion from outer space. Gorbachev did not have at his fingertips the Marxist–Leninist position on collaborating with the imperialists against interplanetary invasion and made no response, confirming the president in his view that he had scored a useful point. Reagan went home happily from Geneva; later he read a 1985 novel called *Air Force One Is Haunted* in which a president aided by the friendly ghost of Franklin Roosevelt forces the Soviets to back down by deploying 390 anti-missile missiles in a system called "Umbrella."

Throughout his presidency, Reagan remained committed to SDI deployment. The 1986 Reykjavik summit (which revealed that Gorbachev, also no scientific whiz, was himself a closet nuclear abolitionist) broke up when Reagan refused to confine SDI to the laboratory. Widely seen at the time as a failure, Reykjavik was later credited as having set the stage for a subsequent treaty eliminating most intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe.

Politically and diplomatically, Star Wars was a success. It put the nuclear-freeze movement on the defensive, brought back the Russians to strategic-arms talks they had abandoned, and may have hastened the demise of the Soviet Union. McFarlane wrote in his memoir *Special Trust* that countering SDI would have "required a substantial increase in Soviet expenditures for strategic forces at a time when the overall [Soviet] budget was stretched to the limit." He quoted Vladimir Lukhim, a former high-ranking Soviet official: "It's clear that SDI accelerated our catastrophe by at least five years." Although Reagan never agreed to trade it away, SDI became, in the words of secretary of state George Shultz, "the ultimate bargaining chip."

The idea of a scaled-down Star Wars survives. Last month, President Clinton proposed spending $7 billion to build a "limited" missile system to protect against an accidental missile launch or attack by a rogue nation. Writing in the *Los Angeles Times* on January 11, Stansfield Turner, who was CIA director under Carter, endorsed the idea. Turner wrote that "we need to consider the costs and capabilities of defenses, not abstract arguments against them."

It is a shame that Reagan cannot know that members of the deterrence establishment who once ridiculed what they called "Star Wars" now give the proposal grudging credit. Gorbachev, at least, is not grudging. On U.S. public television last year, he said that Reagan is "really a very big person . . . a very great political leader." That was always the view of the guy in the bar. NR

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 31, 1999

Dear Rusty,
Please read and comment.
Best,
Al

Dear [Name of contributor under $250]:

Can you believe what Dennis Hastert and the rest of the radical Republicans are up to?

Neither can I!

That's why we need strong leadership in the White House—tested leadership, forceful leadership—of the kind that Bill Clinton and I have been giving since 1992.

We've got to stop Dennis Hestern's radical vision to turn back the clock in America! Speaker Hestert is out of step with America! Let's send him a message!

But to do that, I'm going to need your help.

Please contribute [up to $500] to Gore America '00 to help me tell Dennis Hasterd and the rest of his out-of-step radical conservatives that they've gone too far!
With thanks,
[autopen signature]

Dear [television/film personality]:

It was great to see you last week. I especially enjoyed hearing your thoughts on [name of personality's pet concern]. It's people like you and [name of spouse or spouse-equivalent] who make a difference in this country . . . and this world! Tipper and I salute you.

And thanks again so much for buying [breakfast/lunch/dinner]. I hope that in January '01, you can be my guest for [breakfast/lunch/dinner/coffee] at the White House!
Much love,
Al
[wet signature]

Dear [person or persons over 50 years old]:

The Republicans want to take your security away!

Their radical, risky scheme to dismantle Social Security would leave you out in the cold—literally! Dennis Hespern and his out-of-control Republican gang want to "privatize" your retirement savings. And you know what that means.

A lingering, poverty-stricken march to death, courtesy of the Republican party.

Well, I say . . .
[incomplete]

Dear [person or persons 35–50 years old]:

Are you worried about your retirement?

You shouldn't be. Bill Clinton and I have devised a way to save Social Security by privatizing a portion of your payroll tax.

That's right! The Gore/Clinton Retirement Security Plan will allow you to save effortlessly for your retirement—with no risk.

But the radical out-of-step Republicans under Speaker Dennis Hesperd have said "no" to this plan—the only plan that guarantees that a portion of your payroll tax will be invested in the current financial markets!

I'm like, whatever!

Help me put your future on track! Please give generously to Gore America '00. I need your help! Be cool!
[autopen "Al"]

Dear [pet owner]:

Aren't pets terrific? Don't they make faithful companions?

Then why do the Republicans, under the radical leadership of Speaker Dennis Hostert, want to put your pet to sleep? Haven't they gone too far? Isn't it time . . .
[incomplete]

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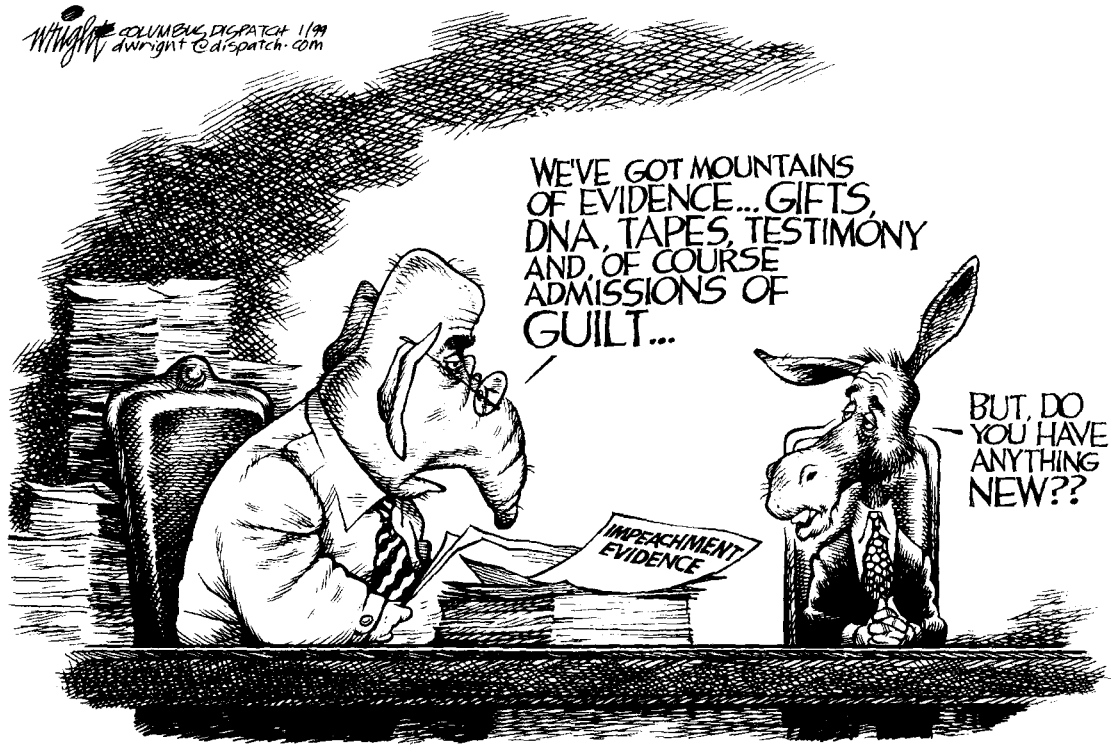
HELP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Chicago Tribune
macnelly.com
The Vice President touring another disaster area
STAYING BUSY... THAT'S GOOD! -SO IMPORTANT AS WE START TO CLEAN UP THE MESS.
MESS?
Air Force Two

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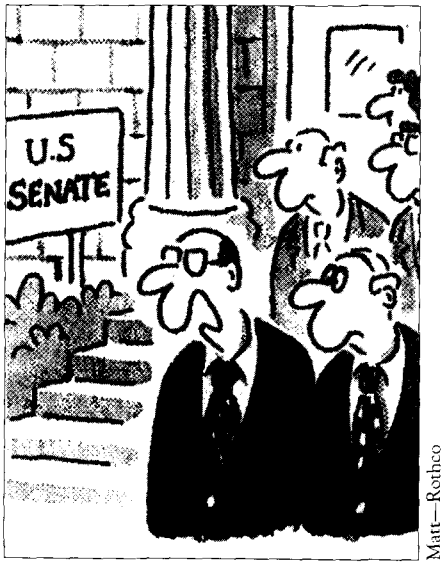
"Tell me the truth, Trudeau! Are you a mover and shaker—or are you just trembling?"

"Yes, doing community service is usually a plus with us, but not when it's ordered by a judge."

"I didn't think it would be so universal."



Matt—Rothco

"How was it for you?"

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Better Believe It

JAMES GARDNER

Life, the Movie, by Neal Gabler (Knopf, 303 pp., $25)

EVERY year or so someone comes along and writes this book. The title, of course, is changed and so is the author's name. And yet it is invariably the same book. Its main thesis is always that the world, or at least America, is so enamored of celebrity, of movies, of public relations, that it can no longer distinguish reality from hype. This idea, which has won the unthinking assent of thoughtful people everywhere, got started 40 years ago with Daniel Boorstin's endlessly quoted book, *The Image: or, What Happened to the American Dream?* That engendered the hogwash of Marshall McLuhan, which begat the humbug of Jean Baudrillard, whose love child Neil Postman sired the incumbent Mr. Gabler.

One might at first marvel at the pertinacity of this publishing micro-trend. Why are such books are written and why are they read? In fact, there is no mystery at all. The authors of these books have the satisfaction of diagnosing an ailment to which they themselves are triumphantly immune. And readers, simply in the act of reading the book—or at least the title—experience a similar exemption from the maladies of the Unwashed. Naturally the author tries to prove his case, but the proof is really beside the point. Most people buy the message when they buy the book. And then, amid many a lugubrious clucking of tongues at the sorry state of the Republic, author and reader felicitate one another on belonging to the Happy Few.

In this latest salvo at the cult of celebrity, Neal Gabler, whose previous books dealt with Walter Winchell and the history of Hollywood, reminds one of that puritan minister who, in his hell-bent crusade against pornography, spends all his time reading the stuff. Gabler seems not to have missed a single installment of *People* magazine, Oprah, or *The National Enquirer*. He writes as one who knows about Zsa Zsa Gabor and Elizabeth Taylor, O. J. Simpson and Roseanne Barr. There is not a scandal or outrage of the last half-century that he does not discuss. In fairness it should be said that Gabler goes beyond show business to include politics, literature, and contemporary art. But for him, these things are usually show biz, or entertainment, by other means.

Jim Carrey in *The Truman Show* (1998)

In Gabler's view, Americans are far more addicted to entertainment than other nations. As he sees it, there is something rooted in Americanness itself that predisposes us to flim-flam. As evidence of this, he returns, in one of his more interesting chapters, to the 19th century and to the newspaper wars between Hearst and Pulitzer and the theatrical wars between William Macready and Edwin Forrest. He goes on to ask: "If [entertainment's] sensuous appeal was so primal as to be practically biological in origin, why didn't ordinary Europeans in the 19th century succumb as readily as ordinary Americans did? Why was America the Republic of Entertainment?" His answer, that religion and aristocratic control were not as strong as in the Old World, though simplistic, is true and plausible in the main.

But Gabler goes too far. "If the primary effect of the media in the late 20th century was to turn nearly everything that passed across their screens into entertainment, the secondary and ultimately more significant effect was to force nearly everything to turn itself into entertainment in order to attract media attention." Elsewhere, enunciating the main argument of his book, Gabler says that "movies took the elements of sensation that were the very basis of entertainment . . . and recreated them in the safe context of narrative. . . . The mind, it seems, did something very similar with one's daily reality even as that reality was already distorted by the theatricalization of life."

Not only is this an exaggeration; it exhibits a distinct innocence about what has always been the way of the world. Man is drawn to illusion and always has been. Reality, unrelieved by fantasy, is hard for us to take. *Mundus vult decipi*, Horace wrote two thousand years ago. "The world wants to be deceived." Or, as T. S. Eliot said in a more contemporary context: "Mankind cannot take very much reality." Now the nature of the illusion, or the embellishment, is susceptible to change. In preindustrial societies, the very absence of information accomplished this decep-

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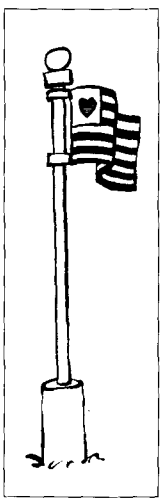
tion with enduring myths handed down through many generations. In our post-industrial society, with its surfeit of data, illusion takes the form of hype, misinformation, and gonzoid conspiracy theories. But in both cases, the same impulses, the same immemorial appetites and predispositions, are being prodded and played upon.

Gabler further contends that there is something new in the American public's infatuation with celebrity. But this too is merely an extension and an amplification of the very same impulse, the very same gene, if you will, that caused earlier generations to look with awe on Pericles of Athens, the Sun King, Madame de Maintenon, Lola Montez, Edward VII, and Edward VIII.

The problem with books like Gabler's is that they never care to make a simple but all-important point: Human beings are not abject idiots. It is indeed astonishing how much television people can watch, how many hours of Oprah and Jerry Springer and Jenny Jones they can consume, without quite losing sight of the essential silliness of it all.

A far greater problem than the unreflective credulity that Neal Gabler ascribes to the American public is—and this really does represent something new in human experience—a pandemic doubt and a cynicism that reach far beyond entertainment into every part of reality. If you look closely, almost everything on television, from children's cartoons to the local news, has acquired of late an ironic edge, a self-referentiality, that was quite foreign to our culture in the days of *The Ed Sullivan Show* and *I Love Lucy*. The average American now knows so much about sound-bites and polling and the art of the spin that he will never again possess the innocent wonderment of his ancestors. In a way, we could all probably benefit from being a little more credulous than we have become.



As it is, the most credulous subset of the population may be the growing minority who write and read books like this one and who insist, despite all evidence to the contrary, that no one aside from themselves can distinguish any longer between reality and myth. **NR**

Jesus in Nikes

ERICA SCHACTER

Playing for Keeps: Michael Jordan and the World He Made, by David Halberstam (Random House, 426 pp., $24.95)

LONG before Michael Jordan announced his retirement from professional basketball, sports columnists, corporate sponsors, and NBA fans all wondered who could ever fill the shoes of "Jesus in Nikes." As this Jordanless season now begins (the first in 14 years, minus his baseball stint), David Halberstam offers both the nostalgia and the evaluation that a career like Jordan's demands.

He provides a crash course in Jordanology for those who somehow missed the footage (read: have not watched TV anytime this decade) of vintage Jordan moments—like the game-winning shot against Georgetown in the 1982 NCAA Finals, which Jordan hit as a University of North Carolina freshman; or the move against Sam Perkins of the Lakers in the 1991 NBA Finals, where in "mid-flight" the gravity-defying Jordan switched the ball to his left hand before slamming it through the hoop.

Of course, these moves are better seen than read about, and while any portrait of arguably the best basketball player ever must include some performance highlights, Halberstam scores his real narrative success off the court. He takes us back to Wilmington, N.C., where Michael failed to make Laney High School's varsity team his sophomore year. He introduces us to Michael's father James, who used to fix cars with his tongue sticking out. He captures Jordan lugging the North Carolina team's film projector, a humiliating task to ensure that the up-and-coming star never got a swelled head. (It didn't work.) And we hear the phone call Michael's father received on June 19, 1984, after the Chicago Bulls drafted his son (as the No. 3 pick). "Move over Oscar Robertson and Jerry West," an old high-school coach of Michael's said, "because the greatest guard in basketball history has just been drafted."

What's particularly effective about Halberstam's storytelling is that he follows Jordan's athletic trajectory, not in chronological order but through juxtaposed images of a hot-blooded college player with an as-yet-unpolished game and an even-tempered 30-year-old at the height of his career. Jordan was not born a flawless pro, but developed his gifts by working tirelessly and intensely. His competitive drive exceeded that of wannabe peers, and this, Halberstam argues, is one of the reasons Michael Jordan is Michael Jordan.

Did Michael Jordan transform the world of sports, or was he transformed by circumstances?

But alongside this how-did-Michael-get-so-good story, Halberstam turns to the larger Jordan question: How did one individual come to "dominate not just [basketball] itself but the psyche of American sports fans"?

Don't laugh, but Jordan's career actually raises an intriguing philosophical question. Does a man shape the events of his life, or is he merely shaped by them? Did Michael Jordan transform the world of sports in general, and basketball in particular, or was he transformed by circumstances? From the book's subtitle—"Michael Jordan and the World He Made"—the reader assumes that Halberstam will argue against historical determinism. But the truth is, Halberstam's is a map less of the world Jordan made than of the world in which he was made. The stories and details here suggest that a confluence of forces and events—good timing, technological and commercial change, and an influential cast of characters—paved the way for Jordan's basketball reign.

Erica Schacter is a member of the *Wall Street Journal*'s Leisure & Arts staff.

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JOIN BILL BUCKLEY AS WE CELEBRATE THE 10TH

CASPAR WEINBERGER, ALEXANDER HAIG, WILLIAM CLARK, RICHARD ALLEN, EDWIN MEESE, JAMES BUCKLEY, VERNON WALTERS, SAM NUNN, JOHN O'SULLIVAN, RICH LOWRY, KATE O'BEIRNE, & PETER RODMAN ON THE

NATIONAL REVIEW 1999 BALTIC CRUISE

London, Berlin, Oslo, Helsinki, Stockholm, St. Petersburg, Tallin, Bornholm, Århus, & Copenhagen. Sailing aboard Holland America Line's Spectacular* MS ROTTERDAM VI *July 18-30, 1999

1999. Has it already been ten years since the Berlin Wall fell? Has a decade passed since the Iron Curtain began to disintegrate?

Times flies when you're having . . . freedom.

To mark the historic 10th anniversary of one of the greatest episodes of the 20th century, your favorite conservative magazine—the very journal that was at the forefront of the fight against Soviet totalitarianism—is proud to announce a special event: the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise***.

Joining **Bill Buckley** and *NR* editors **Rich Lowry**, **John O'Sullivan**, **Kate O'Beirne**, and **Peter Rodman** aboard Holland America Line's luxurious flagship, the MS *Rotterdam VI*, for this once-in-a-lifetime affair will be some of the biggest names of the battle against Communism, including former Defense Secretary **Caspar Weinberger**, former Secretary of State **Alexander Haig**, former White House National Security chiefs **William Clark** and **Richard Allen**, former Senator **Sam Nunn**, former Attorney General **Edwin Meese**, General **Vernon Walters** (former UN Ambassador, CIA nabob, and Ambassador to West Germany when the Wall a-tumbled!), and former Senator **James Buckley**, who ran Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty for the Gipper, (and who's also the brother of you-know-who!). The ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will be your once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet the key players and tacticians who fought and triumphed in the epic battle to topple Soviet totalitarianism.

Through seven seminar sessions, numerous social events, and 12 nights of fine dining (when you'll be enjoying intimate meals with our special guests), the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will provide you with a special, unique opportunity to hear the inside story on how some great men and women worked together to pull off the greatest feat of modern times: restoring freedom to hundreds of millions of oppressed people.

Imagine yourself discussing the roll-back of the Soviet threat with **Caspar Weinberger**. Or finding out from **William Clark** and **Vernon Walters** how Ronald Reagan forged an alliance with the Vatican to keep Poland's Solidarity movement alive. Or learning from **Ed Meese** the inside-the-Oval Office details of how the Gipper battled the Evil Empire. Or asking **Al Haig** how he coordinated anti-Soviet policies with America's allies. Or finding out from **Sam Nunn** the key support this fight received from Democrats (well, some Democrats). Or hearing from **Jim Buckley** how an embattled American radio outfit kept hope alive for millions

NR'S GIFTS: FREE LUXURY BERLIN EXCURSION . . .

July 22, 1999, will be a great day for *NR* cruisers. Early that morning the *Rotterdam VI* will dock in Warnermünde, Germany, where we'll hop on a luxury train for a trip through the lush countryside. Our destination: Berlin. There, air-conditioned motor coaches will take us from one historic landmark to another, including, of course, the remains of the infamous Wall. From dawn till dusk, you'll enjoy great sights, food, drinks, and companionship. This special bells-and-whistles excursion costs $400 per person. But it's yours, FREE, as *National Review*'s "thank you" for joining us on this once-in-a-lifetime trip!

. . . PLUS *NR* WILL PAY FOR ALL THE "EXTRAS"!

Port fees, taxes, transfers, gratuities—those "incidental" costs add up. For the Baltic cruise, they will run roughly $425.00 per person. But as yet another way of saying "thanks," *NR* is picking up this. All told, the Berlin tour plus the "incidentals" is a whopping $825.00 per person value, at no cost to you. How can you say "No" to that?!

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ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERLIN WALL'S FALL WITH

of Europeans. Or reliving with **Bill Buckley** his hand-to-hand fighting in the public arena with America's apologist Left.

All of this can, and will, happen on the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise***. The question is, will you be there?

We hope so. On top of all the discussion of great events, on top of the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Berlin Wall's fall, the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will be a phenomenal travel extravaganza that will bring you face to face with northern Europe's most historic cities and most beautiful sights.

The "Voyage of the Vikings and Czars," as Holland America has dubbed the cruise, is one of the most sought-after vacations, and for good reason: the sights are so stunning, the ports so beautiful, and the "season" so short that most 1999 Baltic cruises are already sold out!

But don't fret: *NR* has a lock on 225 cabins (over 60 are *already* gone!) for this special July voyage—but only for a limited time, so you must act quickly. Here's our schedule:The floating paradise for this special journey is the *Rotterdam VI*, Holland America's new

flagship (everything is in mint condition, and one step above top notch). On board this impeccable vessel you will find every-thing—pools, shops, and lounges galore, plus a casino, java bar, library and puzzle room, spa (with sauna, masseuse, and steam bath), beauty salon, movie theater, tennis courts, running track, and so much more. Whether it's day or night, the *Rotterdam VI* offers you endless entertainment and activities. And as for the sumptuous cuisine, well, it can be summed up in one delicious word: *wunderbar*!

FANTASTIC EUROPEAN ITINERARY

LONDON is the departure point for the *Rotterdam VI*, which will visit:
OSLO, Norway's cosmopolitan capital and the citadel of all things Viking;
ÅRHUS, Denmark's charming port and pit-stop to visit numerous sights, including Hans Christian Andersen's birthplace;
WARNERMÜNDE/BERLIN, where you can take our special tour to visit the historic sights (Checkpoint Charlie, the Wall Museum, the Brandenburg Gate, and so much more) of Germany's capital;
BORNHOLM, the popular Danish island famous for its glass, ceramics, and herring!;
STOCKHOLM, Sweden's capital, home to such glorious waterways that it's called the "Venice of the North";
HELSINKI, Finland's stunning capital, renowned for its gleaming art and shopping districts, your gateway to Lapland;
ST. PETERSBURG, the ancient home to the Czars where you'll find the Hermitage, the Winter Palace, and the spectacular Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul;
MUUGA/TALLIN, Estonia's capital and a tourist's paradise—museums abound in the most "intact" medieval city in Northern Europe; and
COPENHAGEN, the final port for this fantastic cruise, famous for its cobblestone streets and squares (why not stay an extra day or two in this walker's paradise?!).

Even better are the *Rotterdam*'s staterooms—they are elegant and large, and some feature incredible extras (there are many with big, private verandahs—but they're *going fast*!). And on the "Concierge Deck," where the *Rotterdam VI* sports 4 Penthouse Suites (each one some 1,126 square feet) and 36 Suites (565 square feet), there's the

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How so? The sports cable channel ESPN began broadcasting in 1979, but "truly came of age" in 1984, Michael's first year in the NBA, giving professional and college basketball significantly more coverage. In 1991, NBC, having bought the NBA televising rights from CBS, worked effectively to increase its ratings; this happened to be the first season Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls made it to the Finals. As viewers soon realized, Jordan's charismatic good looks did not suffer on-screen. Simultaneously, in the world of advertising, the Eighties witnessed the eruption of the sneaker wars. Since football cleats and baseball spikes don't have much in the way of mass appeal, the marketable athletes were all basketball players.

Yet against this traffic pileup of impersonal historical forces there stands Game 6 of the 1998 Finals, especially that fourth quarter—which turned out to be Michael Jordan's final, fittingly climactic twelve minutes of playing time.

A few days after the game, Jordan and his teammates were celebrating on their home turf. Most were aware it was the end of the Chicago Bulls dynasty as we know it. Scottie Pippen—a player who would have shined more brightly had he not performed alongside Jordan—turned to Michael and said, "None of this could have happened without you." Jordan, Pippen meant to say, was not merely in the right place at the right time, or privileged to know the right people. He made his success happen. Perhaps Halberstam ends with this moment, "a great player toasting an even greater player," to leave us with this last thought.

Other superstars are good-looking, and they have modeled Nikes. But how many of *them* have turned around so many games on their own? How many speak as eloquently in interviews? How many can cut a dashing figure even when playing golf, a sport that seems to encourage dowdiness? How many have a wife, children, and a family life acknowledged to be exemplary? How many have a sense of humor with referees, journalists, and fans? Put all these qualities together in a photogenic 6'6" frame and you'll see why no other player will leave the same mark in the annals of sports history as #23 of the Chicago Bulls. **NR**

Maid of Honor

MARK FALCOFF

The Empress of the Splendid Season, by Oscar Hijuelos (HarperFlamingo, 342 pp., $25)

In this, his newest novel, Oscar Hijuelos (*The Mambo Kings*) proves that even cleaning ladies have lives worth writing about. The central figure of the story, Lydia España, swabs the toilets and vacuums the carpets and drapes of the rich, the elegant, and the liberal of Manhattan, and in so doing learns the secrets of their lives and reflects deeply upon her own. At first blush this sounds sordid or tawdry, but in fact this is a very human, eminently readable, and very *funny* book.

Lydia España is a Cuban who has emigrated to the United States just before the Castro revolution. She went into exile not because of politics but because of an oversized libido: Caught in a compromising situation with an older man by her father—the mayor of their town, with prestige he jealously guards—she is banished to New York. There, after a turn at sewing in various sweatshops, she finds her true métier in cleaning people's apartments. Along the way she marries Raúl, another Cuban expatriate, a waiter at Jimmy's Steak House. They have two children, Alicia and Rico, and settle down to the struggle for a decent life in New York. By the time we catch up with Lydia (circa 1958) whatever rakish qualities she may have possessed as a young girl are banished to the back of her consciousness. Indeed, as Alicia reaches late adolescence Lydia is trying to keep the same tight rein on her daughter's activities as her own father once did on hers. (A sample of their unloving exchanges: "And what is this," Alicia asks sarcastically, "Cuba 1942?" "If you don't respect me, Alicia, then you cannot be the daughter of a Cuban.") Alicia goes through a radical hippy phase, but ends up living in Upstate New York, happily married to a WASPy building contractor with the improbable (to Lydia) name of Douglas Johnson, producing two beautiful (and non-Spanish-speaking) children.

■

By some reckonings, the story of Lydia and Raúl is a tale of immigrant success. But that is not the way they see it.

■

The fate of her son, Rico, is more piquant. A quiet, thoughtful boy, he has considerable difficulty resisting peer pressure in the thuggish street environment around their apartment building. Sucked into a criminal act for which he is only marginally responsible, it looks as if he is about to be pushed down the spiral of ever-more serious offenses and ever-longer jail terms.

But this is 1970 or so, when white liberal guilt is sending forth its most garish blossoms, and a certain Mr. Osprey, one of Lydia's Park Avenue clients who has taken a shine to her, decides to deploy his not inconsiderable resources to save the boy. First, there is a discreet conversation with the judge (whom Osprey knows), then there is another, equally quiet phone call to a fancy prep school in New England (of which he and his sons are graduates) just dying to fill its quota of "Hispanics" (though the term hasn't yet been coined); that is followed by an Ivy League scholarship. Rico turns out

Mr. Falcoff is resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington and the author of *A Culture of Its Own: Taking Latin America Seriously* (Transaction).

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to be genuinely qualified for the advantages bestowed upon him. He ends the book as an affluent psychotherapist with an apartment on the Upper East Side. "No one speaking to him," Hijuelos writes, "would ever have judged that he was the first generation of anything."

By some reckonings, then, the story of Lydia and Raúl is a tale of immigrant success in America. But that is not the way they see it. For one thing, their children's adaptation to the majority culture opens a gulf within the family that can never be closed. Two touching scenes toward the end of the book, when Rico and Alicia and her family visit home, underscore the point with great poignancy.

For another, regardless of their modest economic gains, the Españas will always be members of what Hijuelos calls "the society of Nevers: Never go to Europe. Never buy a piece of property. Never own a firsthand car. Never sit by a late 19th-century French writing desk at the Armory Show, scribbling out checks without a single doubt. . . . Never eat in a fancy restaurant. Never get to be seen by a doctor immediately. . . . Never stay in a decent hotel. Never stop adding up the price of things. . . . And even if things were to change, *never lose the bitterness of the poor.*"

The Empress of the Splendid Season is a delicious, voyeuristic look into the lives of those millions of Spanish-speaking people who have come to this country enticed—as was Lydia—by "the exaggerated fantasies of Hollywood films, where life was all pearl necklaces, fancy mansions, speakeasies, gangsters, cowboys, and unbelievably glamorous women or drop-dead handsome men." Hijuelos tells his story without condescension or false sentimentality, in the tone of a neighborhood gossip. The literary device of the cleaning lady also provides a new and unexpected angle of vision on Manhattan's old money—full of the kind of mordant sociological detail one would expect from a writer like Balzac or Waugh. With this book, Oscar Hijuelos reaffirms his place in the front rank of American novelists and forces the Hispanic immigrant experience closer to the center of our cultural consciousness, where it very much deserves to be. **NR**

Paper Chase

ANTHONY LEJEUNE

Archangel, by Robert Harris (Random House, 373 pp., $24.95)

PROSPECTIVE readers should not be put off if the reviews say that Robert Harris's *Archangel* carries an important political message and that the author's own political position is interesting. Rest assured, we have here an exceptionally well written, skillfully crafted, continuously gripping thriller. "Unputdownable," as publishers used to claim.

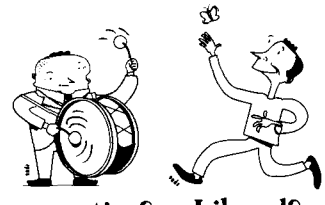
It begins in Moscow—garish, dangerous present-day Moscow, still resonant with echoes of its equally ruthless but more self-confident Soviet past. C. R. A. "Fluke" Kelso, an English historian whose life and career have begun to slide, is lured by the possibility of a great professional prize—finding Stalin's private journal, which is thought to have been stolen and hidden at the time of the dictator's death. As he pursues the tantalizing hints through dusty archives and derelict buildings, Kelso is urged on by an unscrupulous American television reporter, R. J. O'Brian. They become aware of being watched and followed; they are not the only ones looking for the lost notebook. There is a murder. They embark on a foolhardy journey north, where, amid the vast snowbound forests, deadly traps and a fearsome revelation await them.

The sinewy plot never slackens, but what makes the book memorable are the vividly observed backgrounds—crumbling, haunted urban Moscow and a deserted hinterland that can swallow men up. No less authentic are the fragmented but undead relics of the old Soviet system, not least the secret police, which has kept reincarnating itself, as the Cheka, the OGPU, the NKVD, the KGB, and now the SVR (spies) and the FSB (internal security). Looming like an iceberg are the archives, now in theory open for inspection but in fact mainly still censored or locked away.

Mr. Lejeune is NR's London correspondent.

Which brings us, unavoidably, to politics. About the contemporary politics of his own country, England, Robert Harris is deeply and sometimes almost hysterically leftist. On politics of the past he is more sound. The target of his best-known previous book, *Fatherland*, was Hitler's Germany. The dramas of history in general fascinate him. The protagonist of *Archangel* clearly represents the author: "He could feel the charge of history in the dark and renamed streets, the vast apartment blocks, the toppled statues. It was stronger here than anywhere he knew, stronger even than in Berlin. That was what always drew him back to Moscow—the way history hung in the air like sulfur after a lightning strike."

Here, and in articles and interviews, Harris says bluntly that Stalin was a worse monster than Hitler and that the specter of a revived Marxism is far more threatening than the turnip ghosts of neo-Nazism. Marxism has never been properly purged from the world's blood-system. Western celebrities and Third World politicians cheerfully acknowledge their Communist past. They would be much less ready to admit that they had once belonged to the Hitler Youth Movement. Academia



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remains full of Marxist professors: How many would obtain tenure if they were as openly Fascists? In Russia, nostalgia for the old days, even for Stalin himself, is widespread. In the most recent Duma elections, 30 percent of the vote went to Communists, in the 1996 presidential election, 40 percent. *Archangel*'s Kelso ponders a poll result showing that one in six Russians—about 20 million people—believe Stalin to have been their greatest ruler. "The sainted Lenin, of course, had even more support. . . . If one in six Germans had said they thought Hitler was the greatest leader they'd ever had, the *New York Times* wouldn't just have wanted an op-ed piece. They'd have put it on the front page."

Harris's picture of Stalin, a collage of chilling details, almost ungraspable statistics, and lurid recollections from those who knew him, is as effective as anything since Robert Conquest showed an apathetic Western public the enormity of the crimes involved. We are given brief glimpses of the terror that paralyzed Stalin's colleagues, of the way in which so many of those closest to him disappeared, of the long death-lists, including the names of old comrades, signed without a qualm.

Harris said in a television interview that he was more obsessed with Stalin than he ever had been with Hitler. Modern Moscow, where tapes of Stalin's speeches are sold on street corners, is very different from today's Germany—but perhaps not so different from yesterday's. "It's the Weimar Republic," says the American reporter to Kelso. "All we need is Marlene Dietrich in a tuxedo, and we might as well be in Berlin."

Archangel is chiefly a very good story; but novels, as Harris demonstrates, can sometimes bring out truths that history books cannot. Only a few weeks ago the Russian Duma voted, 237 to 69, that a huge statue of Feliks Dzerzhinsky, head of the Cheka and the OGPU, and the creator of the whole apparatus of state terror, should be restored to its place in Lubyanka Square. The FSB, still based in the Lubyanka, took up a collection to help pay for its return. If the German parliament had voted overwhelmingly to erect a giant statue of Himmler outside what used to be Gestapo headquarters, would the Western press not have paid rather more attention? **NR**

■ VICE ■

I Drink, Therefore . . .

MARK CUNNINGHAM

I LIKE to drink—enough to unwind after the daily crisis of newspaper deadlines; enough to forget the day's cares, and the morrow's; enough to warm in the presence of strangers; enough to loosen the tongue and open the ear and really *talk* with a friend; enough, sometimes, to cut loose and get a bit foolish.

Okay, okay: I like to get drunk. You got a problem with that?

Every once in a while, someone who happens to be in AA will suggest to me that I do indeed have "a problem." Allow for the fervor of the convert, and the thought is still worth considering. Alcohol, after all, can chew up lives. It's done so in my family, and is famous for doing so in my line of work, the news biz.

And so I opened Susan Cheever's recently published *Note Found in a Bottle* with interest. The book is the memoir of one literary alcoholic whose father was another literary alcoholic, the noted WASP author John Cheever. In fact, it's her third memoir. After five indifferently received novels, and her father's death, she wrote *Home Before Dark*, a best-selling "biographical memoir" of him. She followed up with *Treetops*,narrating the history of her mother's family back several generations, continuing to explore WASP restraint, resentment, repression, anger, identity, and love.

Then she quit drinking. What she learned in carrying out that decision offers the presumed rationale for *Note*, whose subtitle is *My Life as a Drinker*. But on the evidence of the book itself, Miss Cheever knows now little more than that alcoholism was at the heart of what she hated most about her old life.

Mr. Cunningham is executive editorial-page editor of the *New York Post*.

Indeed, though jacket blurbs and jacket copy long ago crossed the line from advertising to fantasy, this book's promise just what it most conspicuously *lacks*: e.g., from Erica Jong, "a stunning story of spiritual rebirth"; from the publisher, "clear-eyed candor, in a book about recovery that is both wrenching and ultimately inspiring." *Note* never pinpoints when the author quit or what the trigger was, and has just a few scattered glosses on how she overcame the difficulties. (There isn't even much

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Every once in a while, someone who happens to be in AA will suggest to me that I do indeed have 'a problem.'

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about her famous father.)

The bulk of this book is recollections of a series of dreary, dishonest affairs (including three marriages) with men whose charm, if any, she fails to convey; frequent dropping of names, with rarely a sense of real human connection; a certain growing awareness of her need to quit boozing, with more frequent flash-forwards to her sober years. Then she abruptly stops, pats herself on the back, and the book is over.

Even the pain she surely felt can't stir the reader, because she doesn't describe it, but merely asserts it. Miss Cheever surely is "in recovery" now, but that doesn't seem to be thanks to any true self-examination; she just finally grew up enough to stop being beastly to herself, her children, and anyone else who walked in the door.

Note made me wonder if self-ignorance was intrinsic to the alcoholic memoir. When I reviewed Pete Hamill's *A Drinking Life* (1994) for NR, I found much more meat in the author's life apart from alcohol than insight into drinking. Perhaps I was unfair: Hamill's book provided a vital insight for Caroline Knapp—whose memoir *Drinking: A Love Story* (1996) comes closer to delivering on the promise of Cheever's jacket copy: If not quite

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"inspiring," then at least "clear-eyed."

Miss Knapp, a quasi-journalist like the other two, fully describes both the pit and her escape from it. Her recovery she treats with proper caution, noting the ongoing agonies (Why can't I have just one damn beer?) and the poor odds of success—almost everyone else in her rehab class relapsed.

Most important, she captures what may be the essence of alcoholism—quoting Hamill quoting his inamorata, Shirley MacLaine, complaining of movie scripts that use booze to get two characters into bed: "'It's a cheat,' she'd say. 'It's using the drink instead of forcing the painful choice.'" That's what Caroline Knapp did, what all the alcoholics I've known do: use the drug to dodge life's necessary pains, and so bring more pain in the end.

Booze is hardly the only thing we use to avoid those choices, of course. People do it with dope and coke and food and sex and work and, hell, even video games. Politics and religion, analysis and AA, as well: What man can use, man can abuse. And the habit of abuse can reach a point, psychological or physiological, where quitting is the only answer. But that is amputation—a sometimes-necessary crippling.

After all, the good life demands the occasional excess. A full-blown drunken evening now and then is not just an easing of one's burdens, but a celebration of the outrageously fine fortune that is life—a good beyond duty, discipline, and all the other mere stoic virtues.

Even using alcohol as an anesthetic does not lead invariably to alcoholism. After all, most of us learn to limit our drinking by our early 20s—in other words, after a certain amount of first-hand experience with drink and its consequences. It's a part of growing up—learning not always to take the easy out.

As some of AA's more fervent disciples should be reminded, puritanism is not maturity. To cite Shirley MacLaine, it is a cheat, denying the hard work of actually coming to grips with the desires and weaknesses in us that can lead to abuse.

All right, all right: I do drink too much, if less than five and ten years ago. I keep an eye on it, along with a dozen other problems. But other matters—paying the rent, searching for love—take higher priority. Responsible drinking—responsible living—is not rocket science, and it's not Zen Buddhist mastery: It's what just about everybody does, taking life one day at a time. **NR**

■ MUSIC ■

Twisted Sister

JAY NORDLINGER

JACQUELINE DU PRÉ is perhaps music's most tragic case. The outlines of her story are familiar: an English cello prodigy, the winner of every award in sight. Marriage to another young star, the pianist Daniel Barenboim. Recordings, tours, intimations that she would make the world forget Casals and Rostropovich. Then, multiple sclerosis at 28. An agonizing twilight. Death at 42, universally bewailed.

It has now been 25 years since du Pré was forced to put down her bow. All that while, she has dwelt in music-loving hearts (particularly English ones) as a kind of angel: blonde, joyous, ethereally gifted—a light, cruelly snuffed out. Recently, however, her peace and image have been disturbed by a movie, based on a book by her sister, Hilary. The film depicts the great cellist as a depraved and ditzy beast. The musical community is outraged—and rightly so. *Hilary and Jackie* is surely the lowest act of sisterly revenge and hatred ever committed to film. It is a reprehensible work.

The movie opens with two little girls, both musical, but one more promising—Hilary. Gradually, Jackie overtakes her, fired by the desire to be superior, and to be primary in their mother's affections. Hilary has no choice but to give way, subordinating her own ambitions to the bratty meteor that is Jackie. The viewer is to understand one thing clearly: Hilary would have been big stuff, if not for the selfishness of her sister, the favoritism of her mother, and her own good grace and preference for a quieter life.

As the film's Jackie gains internation-

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al renown, she comes to despise her cello, regarding herself as its prisoner rather than its well-pleased master. Mentally unstable, she seeks refuge in her one true friend—Hilary, of course, the movie's heroine—who by this time is living in the countryside with her husband, Christopher Finzi (son of the composer Gerald). Jackie then makes a twisted demand: to engage in a sexual relationship with Finzi, her brother-in-law. Hilary, ever selfless and put upon, obliges (as does the stud). Therapy for the genius, you know.

■

Hilary and Jackie is surely the lowest act of sisterly revenge and hatred ever committed to film.

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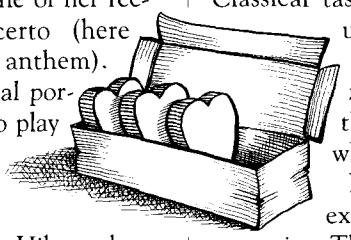
When illness mounts, Jackie is reduced to a shaking, crippled, incontinent mess. Her husband abandons her for another woman, with whom he has children. Jackie sits by the phone and waits for his calls. ("Is that a baby I hear?" she asks during one of them. If you can ever look at Barenboim again, after this film, it will be a miracle.) Alone in her apartment, Jackie manipulates her paws to play one of her records, the Elgar Concerto (here turned into a bathetic anthem). This verges on emotional pornography. "I just want to play again!" Jackie cries, the most plangent words a musician can speak.



At movie's end, there is Hilary—long-suffering, sympathetic Hilary—Hilary who alone can comfort Jackie, despite the many slights, Hilary who, the movie tells you, was really (if you must know the truth) better than Jackie deserved.

The film has ignited a furor, especially in London, center of du Pré's activities. A group of her closest colleagues (including Rostropovich) sent a bristling letter to the *Times*. Clare Finzi, Hilary's daughter, charged that the film was a "gross misinterpretation, which I cannot let go unchallenged." Students from the Royal College of Music picketed the premiere. Barenboim—who has always teetered on the edge of villainy in du Pré-revering quarters—said, "Couldn't they have waited until I was dead?"

Hilary du Pré, for her part, has complained that she is "being portrayed as self-serving and mendacious" (do tell?). She regards the movie as "a love letter to the sister who will always be part of me." Indeed, she has watched the movie ten times (as of January 21)—savoring again and again her triumph in a sick, one-sided game of sibling rivalry some twelve years after Jacqueline du Pré's death, and many more after she was incapacitated. Perhaps the wisest remarks came from Barenboim, who, refusing further comment, said, "We are fortunate to have many documents of Jacqueline's playing. She lives on in the music."

So she does. Du Pré's discography is ample, for one who had so few years to record, though it suffers from the absence of the complete Bach suites, the heart and glory of the cello repertoire.

EMI has packaged eight concertos, including the Elgar. Du Pré, as these discs attest, was a thrilling cellist, possessed of a dark, slightly coarse tone and a commanding, if imperfect, technique. She dug deep into the strings and played with a liberality of expression, even if she was not the untamed Romantic of myth. Her Haydn, for example, is exuberant, but well within the bounds of Classical taste. Her Dvořák is oddly uninspired, but she would have made several more recordings of this staple, as the top cellists always do, when they have the time.

Her Elgar, it is true, is extraordinary—even definitive. This is in part thanks to the presence of Sir John Barbirolli on the podium, but the cellist, in this work, is his musical equal, even at 20. EMI once coupled this recording with Dame Janet Baker's performance of Elgar's *Sea Pictures*. The disc was a testament to all that is magnificent in British musicianship.

Du Pré is at her most complete in her recordings with Barenboim. The two were celebrated for their Beethoven and Brahms sonatas, and not merely because of their value as novelty act. Their Beethoven F Major is meaty yet songful; their A Major is thoroughly intelligent, with a superb, biting Scherzo; their D Major captures exquisitely the restless, ultimately becalmed sensibility of the composer's late period. Fans often claim that Jackie was a better musician than Danny (who, through no fault of his own, survived). This is untrue. But even in a stunted career, she proved herself a queen of her art.

Hilary and Jackie, so controversial in England, is expected to do a brisk business in America, where du Pré is less iconic. The truth about her private life will probably never be known, though the current recriminatory debate will doubtless continue. The movie's director, Anand Tucker, has told the press, "There is no such thing as truth. It doesn't exist." But it does. And it exists in part to declare that the posthumous assault on Jacqueline du Pré by a small and bitter family member is a base, appalling act. **NR**

■ **FILM** ■

Lies Are Unbeautiful

JOHN SIMON

COMIC movies about the Nazis, whether by Lubitsch or Chaplin, have always left me with a bad aftertaste. A comic movie about the Holocaust strikes me as unthinkable. Yet Roberto Benigni's ***Life Is Beautiful***, hailed on all sides, awarded or nominated for numerous prizes, and a sure candidate for one or more Oscars, is just that, or almost. Two middle-aged women who recognized me and queried me about it on the bus simply could not get it through their heads that I was calling the film not excellent but execrable.

Benigni, a well-known comedian who co-wrote, directed, and stars in the film, stops just short of outright Holocaust comedy. The first, prewar part is a silly farce, not nearly so funny as forced. The second part, in a death camp, is sentimental comedy-drama, totally unbelievable and downright stupid. It intends to be sweet, wistful, and touching, and to excuse itself with not wishing to be

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taken literally. I say it cannot be taken, period, unless you enjoy grossing out on imbecile lies.

Guido, the hero, is a waiter in Arezzo (the views of which, as shot by the veteran Tonino delli Colli, are the film's one asset), who comically meets the heroine, Dora, not once but some half-dozen times. He woos her with sundry pratfalls and by calling her Princess, and for the rest, chance takes over—and over and over.

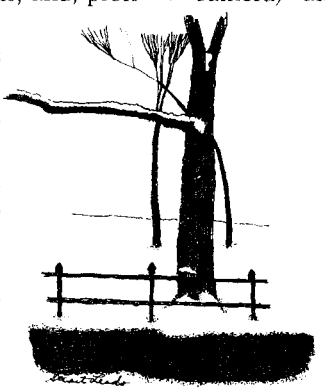
For example, Guido notices that under a certain window when a man

■

***Life is Beautiful* ends in a joyous freeze frame to chill any intelligent viewer's blood.**

■

shouts "Maria!" a key is dropped for him, which, needless to say, beans Guido. On a rainy night, when he has snatched Dora away from her hated fiancé, who is also Guido's nemesis (Guido keeps snatching the fellow's expensive hats and substituting his own, for which the guy chases after him), they seek shelter under that window. Dora says she hasn't got her latchkey, whereupon Guido boasts that the Virgin Mary answers his prayers. "Maria!" he shouts, and, pronto, down flies the key. That it wouldn't fit Dora's lock isn't gone into.



When they get to Dora's gate, she remarks that Guido's hat has gotten all wet, and she decides to address the Virgin herself. She asks for a dry hat, and who should pop up but her deserted fiancé and Guido's nemesis to angrily swap hats. Another miracle—no wonder Dora ends up marrying Guido.

We skip to the last year of World War II. The spouses Guido and Dora run a bookshop on which is painted in huge letters "JEWISH STORE." But otherwise they live in perfect bliss and a cozy house with their bright and adorable 6-or-7-year-old Giosuè. The Germans come and pick up Guido, his uncle, and Giosuè, and lead them onto a death-camp train. Dora, though unsummoned, insists on boarding another car full of women. Here sentimental comedy takes over. Guido tells Giosuè, who mourns a toy tank he left behind, that this is all a game, a giant contest with very rough play, but with a real giant tank for first prize. And he manages to persuade the boy that everything from being brutishly prodded into cattle cars to all the subsequent hardships and horrors of the camp is just a huge competition, to be won by whoever is first to amass 1,000 points for endurance. Hard to tell who is the bigger idiot: the smart, precocious kid who falls for this running lie, or the audience that falls for this movie.

Preposterousness piles up, even though the child is somehow spared the worst atrocities and never even wonders where his mother and great-uncle disappeared to. Instead, he lets his father's smokescreen screen the smoke from the crematoria, and everything turns to rough play with lots of jokiness. And again the most wonderful things keep happening by chance and more chance, or by the hand of the scriptwriters. In the end, the overjoyed kid faces a full-blown American tank as one of the G.I. liberators even hoists him up into it. Riding, he glimpses his mother, and jumps off the tank into her arms. True, his father has been shot (discreetly off-camera) and he probably won't be allowed to keep that U.S. Army tank, but the film ends as mother and son laugh and embrace in a joyous freeze frame to chill any intelligent viewer's blood.

Comics do not have to be good-looking, but must they be as unappealing as the inverted-eggplant-headed, chinless wonder Benigni, with his passive–aggressive charmlessness and fish-eyed simpletonism? And then there is the angular ploddingness of his real-life spouse Nicoletta Braschi, and her by-the-numbers expressions. The little boy, appropriately not cherubically adorable, is passable but nothing special. But the inane *Life Is Beautiful* thrives, while a fine Italian film such as Pupi Avati's *Best Man* vanishes. **NR**

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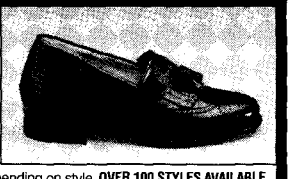

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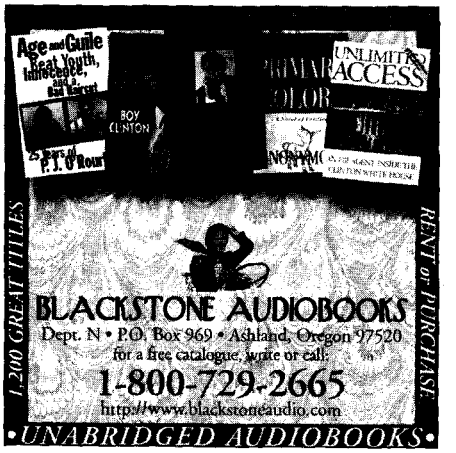

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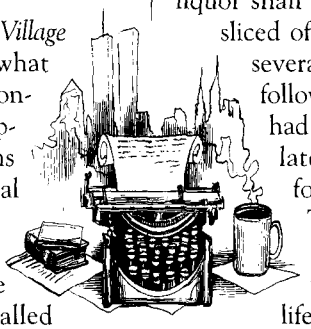
■ CITY DESK ■

Funnies, Revisited

RICHARD BROOKHISER

CONSIDERING that the comic strip was invented in New York City, the form has fallen on evil days here. The tabloids carry only syndicated strips, while the *Times* shuns comics as a badge of class distinction. That leaves the downtown weeklies.



The only interest in the *Village Voice* these days is to see what new ways Nat Hentoff will contrive to outrage abortion supporters, and the cartoons partake of the paper's general tiredness. The alternative torch has been passed to the *New York Press*, where my favorite strip is called "Maakies." I don't think the name means anything; if it does, I probably don't want to know.

The two main characters are an ape and a crow, who belong, Patrick O'Brian's fans will be happy to learn, to the crew of an 18th-century warship. Their formal enemies are crocodiles with French accents in plumed and braided uniforms, though German turtles in World War I U-boats occasionally sail by. But the main theme of the strip is the heroes' private adventures.

Although the crow calls the ape "Uncle Gabby," their real bond is alcoholism (the crow's name is "Drinky Crow"). The crow drinks somewhat more often; When he turns a bottle up in his beak, the contents rush out with the sound "Dook Dook Dook." Often their binges knock them out, sometimes lethally.

But booze is not the only way Drinky Crow and Uncle Gabby come to harm. Every other week, one or both of them are shot, stabbed, burned, blown up, mutilated, infected, eaten by sharks, clawed by bears, swallowed by whales, or otherwise damaged or destroyed. Once they were ripped limb from limb by a mechanical vulture quoting Nietzsche. Once a girl that Uncle Gabby had taken a fancy to told him, "Lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine," so he sliced off his lips with scissors. For several weeks running, the strip followed a family of mites that had taken up residence in the late crow's skull (the mites formed a tiny rock band). Then the crow's soul spoke to them. They asked if he felt anything in the afterlife. "I am strapped to a tornado of pain," was the answer. "Bogus!" they replied. And yet, after every little annihilation has run its course, ape and crow return, stewed but whole.

Below the main strip runs a smaller one that, while rarely violent, can be even grimmer. Probably that is because the characters here (mostly ordinary men and women) are depicted in ordinary social situations. Recently, a vaguely amphibian husband and wife had the following conversation. SHE: You didn't drink today? HE: No, I'm still drunk from last night. SHE: Boo Hoo Hoo Hoo! HE: Ha Ha Ha Ha! "Boo Hoo Hoo Hoo" and "Ha Ha Ha Ha" were repeated three times, and I thought, Yes, that's what alcoholic families are like.

These brutal and senseless events are drawn in a style that is careful, even lapidary. The artist, who signs himself Tony Millionaire, has a definite literary turn of mind, and his characters (except for the mites) have a taste for highfalutin rhetoric. Sometimes they speak in verse.

Are there any conclusions to be drawn, aside from the obvious one that the nation's number-one drug problem is still John Barleycorn?

The audience for Uncle Gabby and Drinky Crow is obviously male. Women are not so openly interested in destruction; they tend to say "Boo Hoo Hoo Hoo," not "Ha Ha Ha Ha." Women get eating disorders and illegitimate children; the worst that can happen to them is illness, degradation, and poverty. Men fight, commit crimes, go to jail, and die young. Look at the statistics—or "Maakies."

The tempo and the detail of the strip are up-to-the-minute, especially the detail. Wile E. Coyote explodes, but never gets his snout sliced off. We've come a long way from George Orwell's 1939 look at English boys' weeklies, where he got his knickers in a twist over the pernicious example of vivid boxing prose. My only question to the horrified reader is, Do you have a television in your house? If you do, then the game is already over for your children. It does not matter what they watch. The pacing and the unresponsiveness of the medium itself will lead to some measure of frustration and disengagement; ultimately to Drinky Crow. One hopes, not to being like him; but certainly to finding him funny.

■

Do you have a television in your house? If you do, then the game is already over for your children.

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On the other hand, the content of the downtown comic strips (and the best in the *New York Press*—"Underworld," "Steven," "Story Minute"—all have broadly similar content) is as old as the hills. Fantasy figures die a thousand deaths, but they always come back to get bounced around again. Is that a sad ending, or a happy one? It is an ending that puts the *lacrimae rerum* in a manageable form. The readers of downtown weeklies are 20-year-olds, and the 20-year-old in us all. I was about 20 when I had my first experience of contemporaries and friends dying, or having close calls, and I suppose that is a normal trajectory. Our skulls will all be rehearsal studios for mites. If you tell the story in ten books of hexameters, it is epic. If you draw it in four panels, it's funny. **NR**

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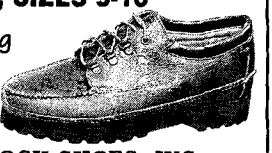

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Impartial Justice

NEW YORK, JANUARY 15

LET us suppose, with analytical designs in mind, that, at the end of the affair—two, three, ten weeks from now—the time has come to vote on whether to convict the president and so remove him from office. The senators rise one after another. The count is 50 to convict, 50 to acquit. Forty-five Democratic senators voted to acquit, five Republican senators voted to acquit. Fifty Republican senators voted to convict.

What happened to the pledge to impartiality? Is perjury understood by Republicans to mean one thing, by Democrats another? Do Democrats understand "sexual relations" to add up to something different from what Bill and Monica did? Was the intimate orchestration—Clinton to Currie to Monica to Vernon Jordan to John Podesta to Dick Morris to Sid Blumenthal—a manipulation of people and events designed to obstruct justice? Or was it something else, merely human responses to an embarrassing situation?

Does reality differ when Republicans look at it? Or is it something on the order of the O. J. Simpson case, first the criminal trial by jury, second the civil trial by jury. Black jurors saw it all, heard it all, and pronounced Not Guilty. Almost all the white jurors came to opposite conclusions. They all took the same oath.

Henry Hyde stressed that oath in his brief introductory remarks. "To guide you in this grave duty, you've taken an oath of impartiality. With the simple words, 'I do,' you have pledged to put aside personal bias and partisan interest and to do impartial justice." Mr. Hyde remembered Thomas More, who died rather than swear to what he deemed an untruth. The significance of an oath taken in public service, Hyde said, "will never be the same after this. Depending on what you decide, it will either be strengthened in its power to achieve justice or it will go the way of so much of our moral infrastructure and become a mere convention full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

The news-sweetener rings in. "It isn't that Republicans and Democrats have different ideas about the facts!! They all really know, and they wouldn't particularly mind saying so if it were necessary, that the president had sexual relations, knew he had, knew he was deceiving the grand jury and his friends and the American people—knew all that stuff. But Democrats didn't think that what he did was an impeachable offense, stupid. That's the difference."

Well, why *should* Republicans and Democrats differ on threshold questions of impeachability? What is it in Republican tradition or Republican perceptiveness that views such behavior as disqualifying, while Democrats view it as less than that? There is no historical link, that we can look to. It isn't something like a long tradition of viewing differently women's-rights questions—women, as historical victims, would more reliably detect discrimination against themselves than men would, so that on certain questions one might expect a greater number of women voting Yes, while men voted No. Are Republicans more crime-conscious than Democrats? Are Democrats more easygoing than Republicans on the matter of sex and inevitable lies?

Or is it, quite simply, a matter of partisanship? You raise your right hand and swear to God you will evaluate the evidence disinterestedly, but you know you are not going to vote to oust a Democratic president. Among other things, the folks back home wouldn't like that.

Interesting question, the folks back home. At noon on Saturday, local time, the day before the Senate concludes, every registered voter is called upon to stop. At that moment sirens will sound, radio and television will freeze shut, church bells will clang.

So there are two hundred million voting-age Americans. They raise their right hand and listen to the recorded adjuration of Henry Hyde: They promise to surmount any inclinations to vote out of partisan feeling for Democrats or Republicans.

"Yes or No: Do you believe that William Jefferson Clinton lied and attempted to obstruct justice and that any president who does this is disqualified from continuing in office in virtue of having violated his oath of office?"

What would we come up with? One hundred million Guilty, one hundred million Not Guilty?

It would be invigorating if Democrats and Republicans voted in equal numbers on both sides of the upcoming question. Or will we be left with an oath that is mere convention, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing?

Did We Spy on Saddam?

NEW YORK, JANUARY 8

THE indignation of Saddam Hussein over the discovery that U.S. intelligence had involved itself in the UNSCOM search for secret weapons was such that he almost forgot to execute more dissidents last month. But somebody reminded him, so in mid-December he shot 81 political detainees. Some of the corpses were returned to their families, but with orders not publicly to mourn the dead. Saddam Hussein doesn't like anybody to be sad about anything he does.

Reports advise us that it was Hussein's son-in-law who triggered the insinuation of U.S. intelligence into the United Nations Commission charged with inspecting Iraqi development of ABC (Atomic-Biological-Chemical) weapons. Hussein Kamal defected in 1995 and revealed to U.N. representatives that his wife's father was outwitting the inspection team. How? We are not privy to the exact information, but the key to it, apparently, is mobility. Casual students of the subject have had it in mind that weapons of mass destruction are developed only in Three Mile Island type cylinders, half the size of a modern skyscraper.

But this isn't so with chemical and biological weapons. You cannot get along with mere test tubes of the size that fit into Christmas stockings for Johnny's introduction to chemistry. But whatever it takes to develop, or garner the skills to develop, chemical and biological weapons can be done in trailer-size compounds. Iraq is bigger than California. All kinds of things happen in California that are not detected, but brave Hussein Kamal at least gave UNSCOM an idea of the technology of deception being used by Saddam. We do not know why, exactly, Kamal suddenly decided to return to Iraq, but he did so, and a day or two later was executed. There

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was no public mourning that time, either.

At this point, U.S. intelligence reckoned the time had come to move in, to do something with our own technical know-how to try to balance accounts out in the field. There is some dispute over how many people knew that U.S. covert operatives were now on the scene. Washington lets out that several UNSCOM members were apprised of the operation. And of course the commission chairman, Richard Butler, presumably knew of it. Cover had to be given to the U.S. agents, to move about with the UNSCOM team to deploy their own resources.

We move to the conspiratorial ganglion of the world scene, Iraq. The perimeter of it all is the U.N. "The U.N. has been and continues to be a focal point for espionage by everybody," one anonymous official said to the *New York Times*'s Tim Weiner. Intelligence officers from most of the world's nations use the organization as a base of operations, he went on. Moving concentrically toward the center, we had the UNSCOM team. They used experts in various capacities. "We'll ask a country to provide three linguists, for example," said Charles Duelfer, an American who is deputy executive chairman of the panel. "We don't say where they should come from. We don't care. Their job is to provide good technical translation. When we ask for non-proliferation people, where do they come from? The Red Cross doesn't have chemical-weapons experts."

There has been plenty for spies to do. Where next did the UNSCOM team plan to go in search of their quarry? A decision was made—and in some cases was leaked to Russia, which leaked it to Hussein, giving him extra time to hide. The U.S. team, we learn, attempted to tape those channels through which Hussein gives instructions to his assistant killer squadron. Information on some of the outposts of the super-secret National Monitoring Directorate was collected, and used during the Impeachment Bombing of December. Once again, we do not know how much damage was done in the four-day workout, but because of the U.S. operation we assume that more sophisticated targets were lined up.

Now Saddam says he will never permit the UNSCOM team to return to Iraq, since it included U.S. spies. But of course he has said such things at other times. He needed no excuse to live one more day in the life of Saddam Hussein, to perform one more evasion. What will we do?

That, as ever, is the question: What will the Superpower do? The U.S. has managed to maneuver itself to rely heavily on the umbrella of the United Nations, whose Kofi Annan has a mincing regard for Saddam's feelings. The notion that we should be ashamed for having used our technical resources to further the goal of depriving Saddam of ABC weapons is a call to impotence. We have to apologize to the world community for only one thing on the Iraqi front, which is that Saddam is still in power.

Campaigns & Money & Reforms

NEW YORK, JANUARY 19

PRESIDENTIAL candidates are weighing in earlier, much earlier than was the custom even a dozen years back, for the simple reason that they need to spend a great deal of money in order to press themselves, and their programs, on the voters. It's probably safe to say that 90 percent of Americans who have qualifications to serve as president are discouraged from attempting the run by the financial overhead of running.

How to illustrate the problem of arriving at January 1, 2000, with $20,000,000 in the bank, garnered from people who can't contribute more than $1,000 each? We hear these days much about men worth 1 billion and more dollars, and there are dozens of them. A graphic reminder of how much money that comes to is given herewith: If beginning the day that Christ died one thousand dollars every day were put aside, one would not yet have raised 1 billion dollars.

At a less cosmic level, between now and twelve months from now a candidate would need to raise $55,000 per day. Do you know, counting your cousins' cousins, 60 people who would put up one thousand each to further your political career, and America's fortune? Good; that will take care of today's requirements.

How is the money then spent? Mostly on television, over 60 percent. Television advertising is disconcerting for several reasons. One is that there are many areas of the country where television ads reach only a small fraction of potential primary voters. If you are waging a campaign in the Connecticut primary you will need to patronize New York television stations, whose transmissions will, 90 percent, hit people who don't vote in Connecticut. Another problem is that, television being as expensive as it is, and viewers being as impatient as they tend to be, advertising one's views in television bites is a daunting business. Abraham Lincoln's House Divided speech took one hour and 20 minutes to deliver. Seinfeld couldn't hang on to an audience for that long. Milton would not get through the first paragraph of his "Areopagitica" if he were retailing it through one-minute bites.

An approach to this problem? Require television stations, when brought in for license renewal, to yield, free of charge, X number of hours for political candidates. This amounts, to be sure, to a levy of about $250,000,000 on privately owned enterprises using, again to be sure, public air waves.

A third consideration is the length of campaigns. Ours have now begun, with the all but formal announcements of Elizabeth Dole and Bill Bradley, and others—Lamar Alexander, Steve Forbes, Dan Quayle among them—expected daily. The election is on November 7, 2000; which means that they are all out there campaigning for 22 months.

An approach to that problem? Shorten the campaign period. There are many arguments for this, mostly the advent of radio and television, which permit a familiarization with candidates way, way beyond what took months of traveling by horse and buggy to do back when traditions were consolidating. How to do it is of course a problem, but one that might be approached by inching back toward nominating conventions dominated by senior political citizens and a better exploitation of technology.

Then of course there is the fourth approach, which is to let everybody donate what he/she/it wants to a primary candidate, always on the understanding that the size and provenance of the donation is immediately recorded and publicized. So if Bill Gates and Michael Jordan want, each, to write out a check for $100,000 for their candidate(s), so what? Ditto the labor unions, ditto General Motors. Already they tend to do that kind of thing through "soft money," which is to say, contributions that step gingerly around the anfractuosities of the law, to give money untied (apparently) to any particular candidate. But we all know whom the Philip Morris people were voting for with their $4.2 million in 1996, and whom the teachers' unions, with equivalent sums, were voting for.

Why not try that? It would bring instant relief to aspirant candidates who could attract big money because there'd be time to address knots of people with deep pockets. But this would leave the candidate time occasionally to peruse the *Federalist Papers*. And perhaps it would incite to run the diffident young Abe Lincoln out there, ignored and dispirited by the endless search for money and recognition.

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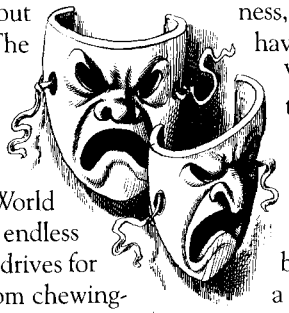
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

THE cry of terror seldom varies regardless of time and place. Take Scarlett's "The Yankees are coming!" and substitute the Huns, the Roundheads, or the "Melech-Ric!" of Saracens fleeing Richard the Lionheart and you have the voice of raw fear through the ages.

Lest you think that voice will be heard no more as the touchy-feely Nineties turn into the compassionate Aughts, think again. We are already living in a reign of terror and it's going to get worse, but the identifying cry will change. Unlike earlier ones, it will lack vigor and martial clangor and offer no dramatic possibilities whatsoever because you can't make a movie about people screaming "Help! The volunteers are helping me!"



My own history of volunteerism grinds exceeding small, having been compulsory. Growing up during World War II meant taking part in endless school-sponsored collection drives for old newspapers, "tin foil" from chewing-gum wrappers, and empty toothpaste tubes. The latter, being lead-based, were supposedly used to make new bullets, so we had to take them to school where they were piled on a table beside a sign reading "Brush Away the Japs!" supplied by the visiting dental hygienist.

The newspapers we made into hospital bags which, we were told, would be used for the disposal of bloody bandages as well as "bed pockets" to hold the personal belongings of recuperating wounded soldiers. To prove it, they showed us a newspaper picture of a man in a bed with a newspaper bag fastened to his pillow with a clothespin.

Nobody ever questioned it, or asked why, if tin and lead were so scarce, they were used to package gum and toothpaste in the first place. We kept quiet because volunteerism, whether voluntary or compulsory, eats rapidly into the human psyche and sends it on warped paths. One path is the Little Napoleon complex manifested by air-raid wardens during the war and Neighborhood Crime Watchers now. Another is the Little Engine That Could complex that motivates eager beavers. Still another is the Patient Griselda complex found in people eager to prove how much punishment they can take. These are the three faces of volunteerism. Most schoolchildren tended naturally toward group two, while I simply laid low. After the war, when it came out that the stuff we collected was useless and the drives had been devised to make civilians feel that we were "doing our bit" and "pulling together," my natural inclination to pull apart received a terrific morale boost.

The Fifties were a golden age of selfishness, which is the real reason they have been enveloped in nostalgia. Volunteering as we have come to know it today began in the Sixties with Kennedy's "Ask Not" trumpet fanfare. The Peace Corps was a triumph of purified ulterior motives, combining salaried wanderlust with a government-approved odor of sanctity that no one dared sniff too hard for evidence of escapism or desperation. Why else would a widow of 62 like Mrs. Lillian Carter of Plains, Georgia, risk cholera in India if not to do good? It was only much later when we met her family that we caught on.

Ronald Reagan upped the ante with his fondness for folksy stories, constantly telling the one about Alexis de Tocqueville and the volunteer firemen, and stashing selfless neighborly heroes in the VIP gallery at every State of the Union until volunteerism became a bee in the national bonnet, buzzing frantically in the manner of half-understood American ideas, ready to swarm.

The first wave hit in 1992 when Ross Perot turned "volunteer" into a code word for pseudo-democracy, insisting that he could do nothing without his followers' permission because they, not he, really ran things. Whenever he was asked an awkward question he had only to squeak, "Gotta ask the volunteers," and all dared call it populism.

Perot primed us for Hillary Clinton, whose book, *It Takes a Village*, describes a nightmare of volunteerism in which everybody sponsors everybody else until we have tutored, sustained, and affirmed each other to death.

To this end she sings the praises of her ideal volunteer, Brianne Schwantes, a 13-year-old invalid who helped battle the 1993 midwestern floods. Brianne suffers from brittle-bone disease; her bones have broken so easily and often that her growth has been stunted, yet when she heard about the floods she persuaded her parents to take her to Iowa to help fill sandbags. There she was, barely four feet tall, volunteering her all for her fellow citizens. Hillary doesn't say, but was there a loud *crack!* that went unnoticed amid all those collapsing levees? Where is this kid now, and how many pieces is she in?

AMERICANS now believe that it takes a village to do everything. We are in the midst of a volunteering frenzy, especially in the suburbs, whose residents have dislodged artsy-craftsy and enshrined grassy-rootsy in an effort to revive a lost sense of "community."

Senior citizens get the worst of it. When not dodging con artists who claim "I just like to help people," they are expected to "mentor" the young like the retired couple in the PaineWebber commercial who invested in no-load mutual funds so they could "work with kids." Open the paper to the Metro Area section and you will find the Mentor Feature. It alternates with the Exhausted Mom Feature about the woman who runs a consulting business from home, gets only four hours' sleep, cooks nothing but fish sticks, irons skirts while wearing them, and volunteers to do the bulletin boards at her children's school so the teacher will have time to mentor the mentors.

The ultimate volunteerism is the medical-research participation ads that begin: "If you are at least 18 years of age and have . . ." All ailments are represented and volunteers are paid, so they can work their way through college. My favorite casting calls are Diarrhea and Chronic Constipation because I can just see Bill Clinton signing up for both and compartmentalizing his way clear with "It depends upon what you mean by *go*" and "Define *fan*." NR

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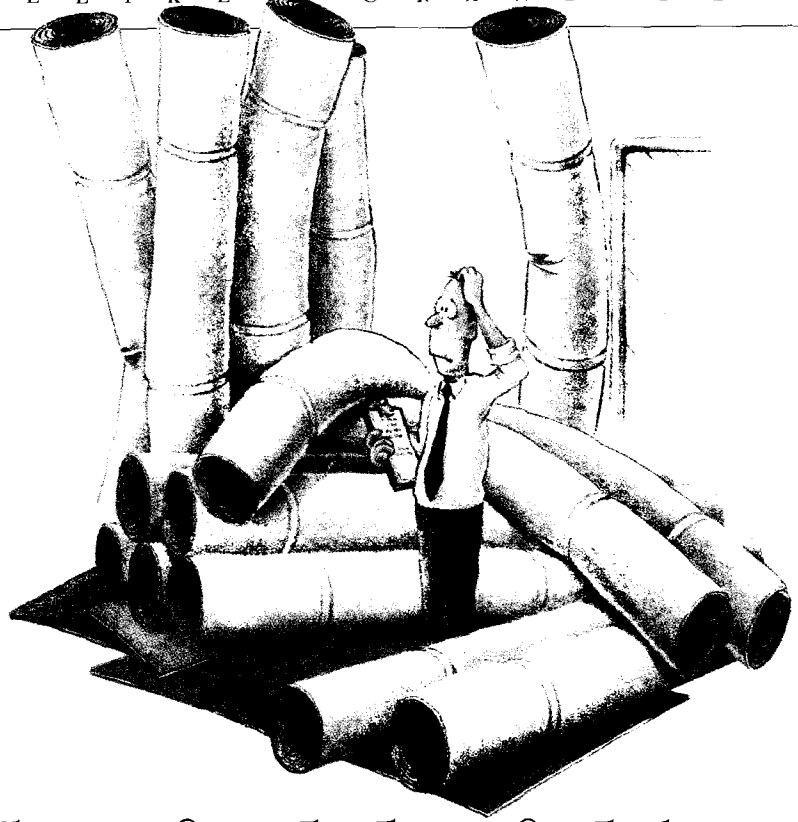

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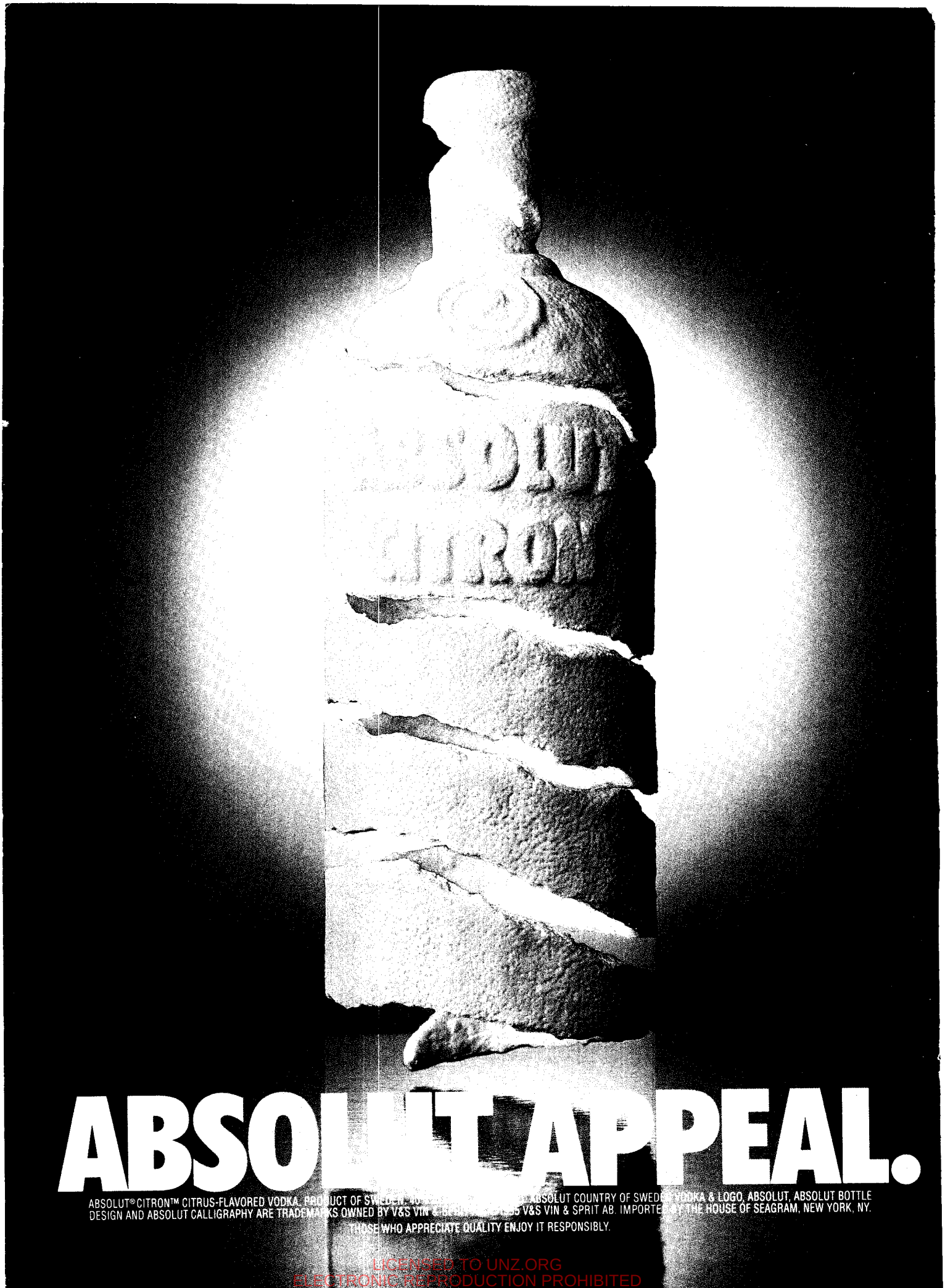

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